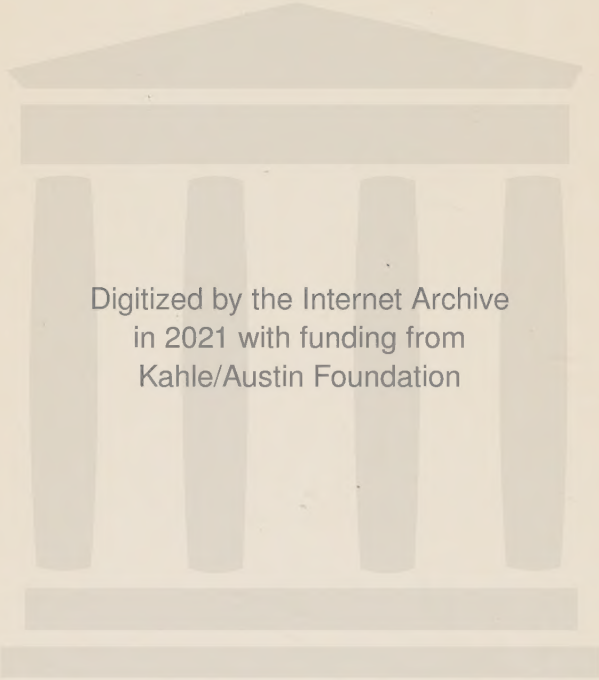


# THE HOPE OF HIS COMING

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CHAS. E. BROWN



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# THE HOPE OF HIS COMING



# The Hope of His Coming

By

Chas. E. Brown

*Author of*

Can We Talk with the Dead?  
Christian Science Unmasked  
Reds and Religion



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## INTRODUCTION

In the early years of my ministry I came into close and friendly contact with many brethren who were adherents of the premillennial system of interpreting the Scriptures concerning the hope of the coming of Christ. While I never adopted the theory myself, I came to have such a warm regard for persons of my acquaintance who did accept it that I cannot sympathize with those attacks upon premillennialism which are based upon or in any sense include slurs or reflections upon the people who hold that view.

In particular am I out of sympathy with those arguments against premillennialism which rest upon the conclusions of negative criticism of the Bible, and which even faintly ridicule implicit faith in that Book as the inspired Word of God. Frankly I write myself down as a Fundamentalist. While I oppose premillennialism, I detest and abhor the skeptical, negative criticism which has sometimes been brought to battle against it.

Nor is it necessary to accept the point of view of skeptical criticism and Modernism in order to oppose premillennialism. The latter is a modern importation into our current religious life—a ghost that stalks the land out of the ancient sepulchers of theological thought. The Sixteenth Century reformers rejected it practically to a



man; and their attitude is still the majority opinion of evangelical Christianity. The old founders of the National Holiness Association were almost unanimously opposed to premillennialism, but in my lifetime I have seen this doctrine spread almost universally among holiness people.

These things are set down to illustrate the fact that altho premillennialism has been in the world for ages of time, yet its present popularity is an innovation in Protestantism at large and in the holiness movement in particular.

If at times the style of this work is somewhat technical this cannot be a fault with students of this kind of literature, as they constantly meet with these arguments and assertions in premillennial literature; and they will, I trust, be tolerant while these points are discussed from a different angle. For example, premillennialist works abound with such Greek words as *parousia*, *eons*, etc., and I have tried to follow these far enough into the Greek Testament to give a true idea of their significance without entirely losing the English reader.

I commit this book into the hands of the church of our Lord, wishing always to be counted among those who cherish *The Hope of His Coming* and who love his appearing.

Yours in Christ,

CHAS. E. BROWN

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# THE HOPE OF HIS COMING

## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS THE MILLENNIUM?

The word "millennium" is derived from two latin words signifying a thousand years. From the Greek word for one thousand we get the term "chiliasm," meaning millenarianism, or the doctrine of the thousand years' reign of Christ on the earth in his human body with his resurrected and glorified saints.

The expressions "premillenarianism" and "postmillenarianism" puzzle some people. These terms are applied to the coming of Christ. The premillenarians believe that Christ will come before (pre) the millennium. The post-millenarians hold that Christ will come after (post) the millennium.

While we do not believe that the Word of God teaches a future reign of Christ on this earth, we wish to treat the subject with utmost fairness and its adherents with the same kind of brotherly love which we desire to receive from them. We believe that discussion of the great fundamental Christian doctrines carried on in the sweet, reasonable spirit which Fletcher

exhibited in his masterly *Checks to Antinomianism* tends to the increase of Scriptural knowledge among Christian people and arouses a fresh interest in religious matters among worldly people. Therefore, we enter this discussion not only without bitterness, but with a fervent prayer and faith that the outcome will be the glory of God and the salvation of precious, immortal souls.

Many good and great men of God have adhered to millenarianism, tho Christ and the apostles did not teach it and the major part of the great Christian teachers of all time have not held it. It is true that a small sect of millenarians teach another probation—an opportunity for the sinners of this age to repent, in the millennium. Yet it is a great mistake to charge all millenarians with that heresy. The great body of millenarians found in the various denominational bodies and in the holiness movement do not teach that sinners who die in this age will have another chance to repent in the millennium. Such sinners, they say, are eternally lost. They do teach, however, that sinners who may happen to be alive on earth at the time of Christ's reign will have a better chance to repent than do those living today. At least that is a fair inference from the doctrine that



practically all men will be converted through the display of power which Christ will then make. Since only a fractional part of men are converted now, surely the chances must of necessity be better at a time when practically all men will be saved.

The postmillenarians hold that the millennium will simply consist of a long period of spiritual prosperity under the ordinary means of grace now operating, without any cataclysmic happenings. They expect the conversion of the majority of mankind in this way. Generally speaking, they also look for the Christian era to continue and the world to stand throughout ages of future time before the end.

The premillenarians believe that the world is rapidly growing worse; that there is no hope for it under present conditions; that with increasing wickedness in the outside world there is also deepening apostasy in the professed church; that the world will never be converted in the present age; and that Christ's coming to set up his kingdom is very near, even at the door.

Quoting from Joseph A. Seiss, Professor Sheldon presents the following outline of premillennial doctrine: "(1) That Christ Jesus, our adorable Redeemer, is to return to this

world in great power and glory, as really and literally as he ascended up from it. (2) That this advent of the Messiah will occur before the general conversion of the world, while the man of sin still continues his abominations, while the earth is yet full of tyranny, war, infidelity, and blasphemy, and consequently before what is called the millennium. (3) That this coming of the Lord will not be to depopulate and annihilate the earth, but to judge, subdue, renew, and bless it. (4) That in the period of his coming he will raise the holy from among the dead, transform the living that are waiting for him, judge them according to their works, receive them up to himself in the clouds, and establish them in a glorious heavenly kingdom. (5) That Christ will then also break down and destroy all present systems of government in church and state, burn up the great centers and powers of wickedness and usurpation, shake the whole earth with terrific visitations for its sins, and subdue it to his own personal and eternal rule. (6) That during these great and destructive commotions the Jewish race shall be marvelously restored to the land of their fathers, brought to embrace Jesus as their Messiah and King, delivered from their enemies, placed at the head of the nations, and made the

agents of unspeakable blessings to the world. (7) That Christ will then reestablish the throne of his father David, exalt it in heavenly glory, make Mount Zion the seat of his divine empire, and, with the glorified saints associated with him in his dominion, reign over the house of Jacob and over the world in a visible, sublime, and heavenly Christocracy for the period of a 'thousand years.' (8) That during this millennial reign, in which mankind is brought under a new dispensation, Satan is to be bound and the world enjoy its long-expected Sabbatic rest. (9) That at the end of this millennial Sabbath the last rebellion shall be quashed, the wicked dead, who shall continue in Hades until that time, shall be raised and judged, and Satan, Death, Hades, and all antagonism to good, delivered over to eternal destruction. (10) That under these wonderful administrations, the earth is to be entirely recovered from the effects of the fall, the excellence of God's righteous providence vindicated, the whole curse repealed, death swallowed up, and all the inhabitants of the world thenceforward forever restored to more than the full happiness, purity, and glory which Adam forfeited in Eden'' (History of Christian Doctrine, pp. 389-390).

The foregoing is a reasonably full outline of

premillennial doctrine, except that it does not specifically mention some of the most prominent technical phrases of premillennialism, such as the rapture, the great tribulation, the revelation, dispensational truth, and the like; nor such doctrines as the revival of the Levitical sacrificial and temple service.

Thus we have spread before us a revived system of Judaism which throws the present Christian church and dispensation into the background entirely, a system also—which however pleasant it may be to the imagination—is in many respects altogether contrary to the plan outlined in the Word of God, as we hope to show later.

## CHAPTER II

### ORIGIN OF THE MILLENNIUM TRADITION

Almost all ancient nations preserved some memory of the Garden of Eden; and by most of them the idea was reflected forward into the dim and distant future of a golden age to come. Doubtless it is true that the modern millenarian movement has its root in those ancient yearnings and longings which reach back to the childhood of the human race. But historically we can trace the modern theory to the twisted and perverted view which the old scribes and Pharisees held of the coming Messiah.

What is called the "Messianic hope" is a strong feature, in fact the leading idea of the whole Old Testament. The promise of the coming Messiah is the chief burden of all its message. This promise was read with anxious longing and studied in minutest detail by ancient Israel before the coming of Christ Jesus to the world. The record of ancient Jewish literature discloses the fact that probably no premillennialists in the world today study the prophecies concerning the second coming of



Christ as assiduously as did the ancient scribes and Pharisees study the doctrine of Christ's first coming.

But it is a very sad and sobering thought that the leaders and teachers of ancient Israel misunderstood and misinterpreted the things concerning the coming Messiah. This point seems too plain to require emphasis. They rejected him because he did not fulfil their expectations. He fulfilled the prophecy reasonably understood and soberly interpreted, but not the Jews' fantastic ideas of it. Expecting an outer glory and an earthly reign, they failed to discern the inner glory and the spiritual kingship of Christ.

The writer is well aware that there are many devout and earnest Christians among premillennialists, and he earnestly asks them to consider whether a system which blinded the eyes of the Jews to the knowledge and faith of Jesus and caused his rejection then may not have possibilities of danger now.

Perhaps we may not care much about ancient history; but the modern doctrine of premillennialism is discussed so eagerly today that no point relating to it, however remote it may be in time, can be without interest to students of the subject. Therefore, out of volumes of avail-

able matter I wish to select enough material to make it plain beyond dispute that the scribes and Pharisees expected the Messiah to set up an earthly millennium and rejected Christ because he did not do so. We shall set before you excerpts from the very literature and tradition that were current in Palestine in the days before and during Christ's earthly ministry.

In II Baruch, a Jewish book probably written 100—50 B. C., we read (72:2): "After the signs have come, of which thou wast told before, when the nations become turbulent, and the time of my Messiah is come, he shall both summon all the nations, and some of them he shall spare, and some of them he shall slay. These things therefore shall come upon the nations which are to be spared by him. Every nation which knows not Israel and has not trodden down the seed of Jacob shall indeed be spared. And this because some out of every nation shall be subjected to thy people. But all those who have ruled over you or who have known you shall be given up to the sword.

"And it shall come to pass, when he has brought low everything that is in the world, and has sat down in peace for the age on the throne of his kingdom, that joy shall then be revealed, and rest shall appear. And wild beasts shall

come from the forest and minister unto men, and asps and dragons shall come forth from their holes to submit themselves to a little child. And women shall no longer then have pain when they bear, nor shall they suffer torment when they yield the fruit of the womb. And it shall come to pass in those days that the reapers shall not grow weary, nor those that build be toil-worn; for the works shall of themselves speedily advance together with those who do them in much tranquility."

In the foregoing passage, not all of which is quoted, mankind is promised long life; freedom from disease, anxiety, war, travail, and the fatigue of toil—the latter because the work will perform itself.

This seems to be quite enough for modest-minded men, but in another place the same author promises a great feast: "And it shall come to pass when all is accomplished that was to come to pass in those parts that the Messiah shall then begin to be revealed. And Behemoth shall be revealed from his place, and Leviathan shall ascend from the sea, those two great monsters which I created on the fifth day of creation, and shall have kept until that time; and then they shall be for food for all that are left. The earth also shall yield its fruit ten

thousandfold, and on each vine there shall be a thousand branches, and each branch shall produce a thousand clusters, and each cluster produce a thousand grapes, and each grape produce a cor of wine. And those who have hungered shall rejoice; moreover, also, they shall behold marvels every day. For winds shall go forth from before me to bring every morning the fragrance of aromatic fruits, and at the close of the day clouds distilling the dew of health. And it shall come to pass at that selfsame time that the treasury of manna shall again descend from on high, and they will eat of it in those years, because these are they who have come to the consummation of time. And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that he shall return in glory'' (29:5—30:1).

The writer heard a millenarian preacher say that potatoes would be twenty-five cents a bushel during the millennium. (He was not preaching to farmers then.) But this ancient Jew had a far more attractive dream than that—delicious food abundant and free. One wonders if when Christ fed the multitude many of the people did not begin to think that he would soon fulfil these expectations, therefore the wish to make him king by force.

In I Enoch, probably written 150-100 B.C., we read: "And then shall all the righteous escape, and shall live till they beget thousands of children, and all the days of their youth and of their old age shall they complete in peace. And then shall the whole earth be tilled in righteousness, and shall all be planted with trees and be full of blessing. And all desirable trees shall be planted on it, and they shall plant vines on it: and the vine which they shall plant thereon shall yield wine in abundance, and as for all the seed which is sown thereon each measure (of it) shall bear a thousand, and each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil (10:17-20).

The great Jewish-Christian scholar, Ederheim, after a lifetime of study of the ancient Jewish literature, has given us a summary of its teaching concerning Messianic times. Even the summary is too long to quote in full. Excerpts follow: "For that vast new Jerusalem (not in heaven, but in the literal Palestine) angels were to cut gems forty-five feet long and broad (thirty cubits), and place them in its gates; the windows and gates were to be of precious stones, the walls of silver, gold, and gems, while all kinds of jewels would be strewn about, of which every Israelite was at liberty to take. Jerusalem would be as large



as, at present, all Palestine, and Palestine as all the world . . . .

“The land would spontaneously produce the best dresses and the finest cakes; the wheat would grow as high as palm-trees, nay, as the mountains, while the wind would miraculously convert the grain into flour, and cast it into the valleys. Every tree would become fruit-bearing; nay, they were to break forth, and to bear fruit every day; daily was every woman to bear child, so that ultimately every Israelitish family would number as many as all Israel at the time of the Exodus . . . . Jerusalem would, as the residence of the Messiah, become the capital of the world, and Israel take the place of the (fourth) world-monarchy, the Roman Empire, etc.”

Let us not smile at these childish old fables. They are not so innocent as they seem. They are the rosy goggles that blinded the ancient Jews to reject Jesus Christ. This is the “deep knowledge of the Word” whose acceptance made the rejection of Jesus inevitable. This old relic that seems so harmless to us is the very instrument that the Jewish nation used to commit spiritual suicide two thousand years ago. This old rusty spear-head is corroded with the blood of the murdered Son of God.

One need only to read Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians to ascertain that there were many abuses which crept into the early church. Thousands of her converts were fresh from the monstrous vice and sin of heathenism. Her Jewish converts were slow to learn the nature of the gospel. Even an inspired apostle, such as Peter, required years of experience and a heavenly vision before he grasped the real inward nature of the gospel of Christ. Our school-children know more about the earth than did Plato; and it is not irreverent to say that our Sunday-school children understand the gospel better than did the apostles until they were supernaturally enlightened by the Holy Ghost.

Premillenarians claim that the apostolic church was wholly millenarian. Beyond doubt millenarianism was carried over by Jewish converts into Christianity. Just as they carried over circumcision, the law, Sabbath, abstinence from certain foods, etc. But Justin Martyr, who was himself a millenarian, denies categorically that the whole church was millenarian. Writing about 140 A.D., he says, "*Many* who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are *true Christians*, think otherwise" (Dialog with Trypho, chapter 80). One trait of the ancient millenarians we would commend to their mod-

ern brethren—they were willing to admit that those who “think otherwise” about the millenium can yet belong to the “pure and pious faith” and be “true Christians.” We who “think otherwise” very often fail to receive that much courtesy today.

That whatever millenarianism there may have been in the early church (it is impossible for friend or foe at this late date to determine the amount) was drawn from Judaism, is apparent from the following quotation from Irenæus, an early Christian writer, in which he seems to quote verbatim from the old Jewish fables of an earlier day: “The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, ‘I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me.’ In like manner (the Lord declared) that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would

yield ten pounds of clear, pure, fine flour'' (Against Heresies, Book 5, ch. 33:3).

In this passage we see how the Jewish doctrine of an earthly millennium was transplanted bodily, root and branch, into the Christian church. Yet it never gained full sway, for it was not taught by Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Tatian, Athenagoras, Theophilus, Cyprian, or Clement of Alexandria. It never took permanent root, as did such doctrines as the deity of Christ, and it soon died out.

The foregoing instances from ancient literature serve to illustrate the carnal and materialistic conceptions of the millennium held by the forerunners of modern premillennialism. That at least some of their modern disciples are quite as materialistic as themselves, cherishing carnal notions of the manner of founding the kingdom of God exceedingly shocking to all spiritual Christians not prejudiced by theory is indicated by the following quotation from a prominent modern millennial teacher, Dr. I. M. Haldeman, of New York.

Concerning the coming of Christ, he says: "He comes forth as one who no longer seeks either friendship or love . . . . His garments are dipped in blood, the blood of others. He descends that he may shed the blood of men

. . . . He will enunciate his claim by terror and might. He will write it in the blood of his foes. He comes like the treader of the winepress, and the grapes are the bodies of men. He will tread and trample in his fury till the blood of men shall fill the earth . . . . He will tread and trample them beneath his accusing feet, till their upspurting blood shall make him crimson . . . . He comes to his glory not as the Savior meek and lowly, not through the suffrage of willing hearts and the plaudits of a welcoming world, but as a king, an autocrat, a despot, through the gushing blood of a trampled world. And those who follow this emergent, wrathful king of heaven . . . are represented as armies. They come forth as a body of fighters. They come forth to assist the Warrior to make war on the earth. In this way the kingdom is to come, not by the preaching of the gospel and the all-persuasive power of the Spirit of God'' (The Coming of Christ, ch. 17, Quoted by Harris Franklin Rall in Modern Premillennialism, p. 118).

Premillennialists abhor and condemn all spiritual interpretation; therefore this must be a literal picture of the actual process of founding the kingdom of Christ in the world.

It must not be forgotten that non-millen-

nialists are just as truly Christians as are premillennialists. Therefore if there is to be a millennium of that kind they will be in it just as fully as the premillennialists. I can only say that in childhood I gave my heart to Christ; and in what career he may have in future ages I fully expect to participate, by his grace. But I must admit that from what I have learned of him in the New Testament I should certainly be astonished if in the morning of the resurrection I should be handed a rifle and some poison gas and told to chop, wound, maim, gas, bomb, shoot, and kill the sinners yet living on the earth. Reverently I must say that I would require some kind of proof that it was not the devil commanding me before undertaking such a campaign as that.



## CHAPTER III

### THE QUESTION OF INTERPRETATION

“No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (II Pet. 1:20). Premillennialists often sharply criticize those who disagree with them in the interpretation of Scriptural prophecies. Some of them seem to think it is wrong to attempt to interpret the Bible at all. “Just take it as it reads,” they say.

None of us claims to be infallible, but I sincerely believe that we are duty-bound devoutly and wisely to interpret the Word of God. In fact the minister of God is commanded to interpret it. He must be “a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing [Greek, “cutting straight”] the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15).

We cannot too deeply impress the fact of the simplicity and straightforwardness of the Word of God in all things that pertain to our common salvation. We believe that the most powerful evangelistic agency conceivable is the Bible without note or comment. Not Greek or Hebrew, but a childlike heart is needful to understand the way of salvation therein revealed.

But the man who denies that there are mysteries and deep things of God and things hard to be understood in the Bible flatly contradicts not only reason and common sense, but the Word of God itself. "Without controversy great is the *mystery* of godliness" (I Tim. 3:16). "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the *deep things* of God" (I Cor. 2:10).

And the apostle Peter warned of the danger of wrongly interpreting Paul's writings because in them "are some things *hard to be understood*, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16).

There is an old saying that the Bible is like a wax nose capable of being bent as one wishes. Quite the contrary, the Bible has one consistent and intelligible meaning; but as gold and diamonds are not found without some difficulty, so the deeper riches of God's Word repay diligent search and effort. Nature is capable of many interpretations, yet nature is not a lie.

Jesus Christ was the eternal Word of God incarnate in human flesh and as such he voluntarily subjected himself to many limitations growing naturally out of that relation. He was not omnipresent in his body. He was subject to heat and cold, to pain and suffering. He

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was liable to be misunderstood, and was, in fact, often misunderstood. Just so the Bible is the Word of God in another sense—in the form of human language. As such, like our adorable Savior, in this earthly life it is subject to certain natural limitations, wisely permitted in the providence of God. For example, in all highly developed languages, it sometimes happens that one word will have as many as a dozen meanings. (Open any large dictionary at random and observe this fact.) Scripture, being written in human language, conforms with the various types of human speech and assumes the ordinary rhetorical forms of composition such as type, metaphor, figure, parable, allegory, poetry, and prose. In addition, its difficulties are multiplied by translation. It therefore requires interpretation to a certain extent at least, just as do other books.

Two things, therefore, are requisite for an adequate interpretation of the Book—spirituality and knowledge. Possessing the first of these the moral and spiritual lessons of the book, the matters of major importance, are grasped almost unerringly by even the most illiterate. Such earnest, tho illiterate readers never get any bad lessons from the Book. We could almost say that they never misunder-

stand its moral and spiritual message. But they very often miss its literary and historical meaning so far as to cause astonishment. This latter is not so important as the former, but it is folly to deny that it is necessary to a full and satisfactory interpretation of the text.

We maintain that if a man wishes to read the Bible in order to learn to be a good man and go to heaven, he needs only to be able to read; or failing in that have some one read to him. But if he desires to master the literary and historical interpretation of the Bible and become skilful in understanding its doctrines, he must do considerable study, no matter how spiritual he may be.

The Word says, "I have said, Ye are gods" (Ps. 82:6; John 10:34). We hold that this passage requires interpretation. It cannot possibly be taken literally. However, we shall not stop to discuss it here.

"The Rock of Israel spake to me" (II Sam. 23:3). Is there any one so "literal" as to say that a rock spoke to David? God spoke to him.

The Lord said to Jeremiah, "I have made thee this day a defended city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls" (Jer. 1:18). God spoke this. It is true. But is it to be taken literally that God made of one man a whole city with houses

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full of people and streets full of traffic? If that is what it means, I shall believe it, tho it would be a most marvelous miracle. However, I interpret this passage as figurative. It seems more reasonable so to think of it.

“Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink” (Amos 4:1). I am not a Higher Critic and I do not wish to be called one, but I must admit that I do not believe this is to be taken literally. I do not believe that Amos meant to tell us that there were cattle in ancient Samaria that oppressed the poor, crushed the needy, and addressed their masters in human language. Should not this passage be regarded as figurative?

“The seven good kine are seven years” (Gen. 41:26). Seven cattle are not literally seven years, but represent seven years.

“Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well . . . Let them be only thine own, and not strangers’ with thee” (Prov. 5:15, 17). I do not believe this command is to be taken literally; for that would mean that every householder should have his own cistern and well; and let no one drink from it but himself. In the great city where I live

not one man in one hundred thousand has his own well; and I doubt if there is a cistern in the city. Interpreted correctly, this passage is found to refer to the purity of conjugal love.

We read in Isa. 51:21 of Jerusalem being drunk. But it must be regarded as figurative.

The allegories of the Old Testament likewise demand a non-literal interpretation.

“Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it, etc.” The Lord never brought a literal vine out of Egypt, but his own people Israel.

In Eccl. 12:3-7 occurs a striking picture of the old age of a man: “In the days when the keepers of the house [the arms and hands] shall tremble, and the strong men [the legs] bow themselves.” Regarded as figurative, this passage yields a rich lesson.

The same may be said of the wall in Ezek. 13:10.

The majority of Christian commentators agree that the whole book of the Song of Solomon is to be interpreted spiritually of the holy love between Christ and his church. I think it is not overrefinement to say that this interpretation here seems more reverent and also more edifying.

Surely the parables of the Old Testament



must be regarded as figurative. How else can we understand Nathan's parable in II Sam. 12:1-4; Isaiah's vineyard in Isa. 5:1-7; the marriage of Jehovah in Ezek. 16; and the two eagles in Ezek. 17:2-10?

In the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel occurs a story of the prophet Ezekiel's being carried away and set down in a valley of dry bones, which under his prophesying took on flesh and form and life. Here Dr. Gray, regarded as one of the foremost premillennial scholars, forsakes the literal interpretation and calls this story a symbol. Most of us can agree with him, but it is not literal interpretation.

For the benefit of the brethren who believe in taking every word literally, let it be said that many in the ancient synagog interpreted this scripture literally. They taught that these bodies actually literally revived and returned into the land of Palestine: "'I myself' saith Rabbi Judah Ben Betirah, 'am one of their offspring; and these very phylacteries which my grandfather bequeathed to me belonged to them'" (Lightfoot's *Horæ Hebraicæ*, IV, p. 12). Here is a consistent literal interpretation; but somehow it does not seem as reasonable as Doctor Gray's "spiritualizing."

We have given only a few instances out of

the vast number of passages in the Old Testament that will not possibly bear a literal interpretation. These ought to be sufficient to at least raise a question as to whether it may not also sometimes be necessary to interpret the prophecies of the Old Testament figuratively and to indicate that one may do so without being a higher critic, an infidel, or a backslider. How can it be sinful and wrong to follow a method in the prophets which is followed by premillennialists and all others and which must be followed in other parts of the Bible?

In fact, when it is known that the Bible abounds in poetry, types, symbols, parables, allegories, visions, and dreams one can but wonder at the attitude of mind which condemns as sinners and false prophets many Christians of long and blameless Christian experience merely because they regard certain passages in the prophecies as figurative or symbolical.

Indeed we say it with the utmost kindness and love; but pleas for a literal interpretation and condemnation of all "spiritualizing" seem entirely inconsistent in our premillennial brethren when as a matter of fact their Scriptural expositions abound in allegorical teaching of the most pronounced type. Take for example C. H. M.'s notes on the Pentateuch, the notes

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and commentaries of Dr. Gray and Dr. Scofield, and in fact all the Bible works of premillennialists dealing with the Pentateuch which I have ever seen simply abound with figurative and allegorical interpretation. Why then can it be sinful in others to follow their example?

“Understandest thou what thou readest?” Philip asked the eunuch. And the eunuch, a wise truth-seeker, replied, “How can I, except some man should guide me?” (Acts 8:30, 31). God sent dreams and visions frequently which the recipient was unable to interpret, e.g., the dreams of Pharaoh and of Nebuchadnezzar. These revelations of God needed an interpreter such as Joseph or Daniel.

Christ’s teaching often required interpretation. “When they were alone, he expounded [Greek, *epelue*, from *epiluo*, meaning to untie, or explain what is hard to understand] all things to his disciples” (Mark 4:34). The Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament require explanation and interpretation. It cannot be wrong to interpret them correctly. For even after three years with Christ the apostles never understood them; and on the road to Emmaus “He expounded [Greek, *diermeneuen*, from *diermeneuo*, meaning to interpret] unto

them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself'' (Luke 24:27).

Even the writers who wrote the prophecies did not at all times understand them. "And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" (Dan. 12:8). They studied their own writings and sought to be able to interpret them wisely. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently . . . searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (I Pet. 1:10, 11).

## CHAPTER IV

### “SPIRITUAL” INTERPRETATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Our premillennialist brethren make a strong plea for a literal interpretation of the prophecies; but if the literal interpretation will not always hold good even in the plain historical parts of the Bible, how can we expect to press it minutely in the more difficult prophetic portions which abound in figures of speech of all kinds? Yet it is on these passages that premillennialism is built. They therefore make it a sin to “spiritualize” these portions of Scripture.

Herein I use the terms “spiritualize” and “spiritual interpretation,” not in a narrow technical sense, but in a broad, popular sense to cover generally all forms of non-literal interpretation, this being the way in which I generally find the term used in premillennial literature. In this chapter I wish to show that “spiritualizing” is certainly often a legitimate method of interpreting Scripture, for it is amply supported in the New Testament in two ways: first, the writers of the New Testament use language which cannot be taken literally,

and second, they themselves often give a non-literal interpretation of Old Testament scriptures. Jesus once said of Herod, "Go ye, and tell that fox" (Luke 13:22). Of course we all know that Herod was not a literal fox, having fur and claws.

"Let the dead bury their dead" (Matt. 8:22) cannot be taken literally, for it is manifestly impossible.

Nicodemus made a mistake which merited Christ's rebuke when he interpreted literally Christ's words: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). We have interpreted these words spiritually so long that we never think of the act as "spiritualizing." Yet there is not, nor ever has been in all the world, one man who was ever "born again," if you insist upon interpreting the words literally, as premillennialists do the prophecies.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," said Jesus (Matt. 5:13). If that were literally true, the Christian farmers would be in danger of being eaten by the cattle on their farms.

When Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19) he meant what he said to be interpreted of the human body which he bore. But the Jews un-



derstood him literally as referring to the literal temple; and this misunderstanding based on a literal interpretation was one of the charges for which they condemned him to death.

“For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ” (I Cor. 10:4). Of course Christ was not a literal rock any more than he was a literal door, vine, shepherd, branch, or corner-stone. The passage here says plainly that it was a spiritual rock; yet there are interpreters who assert that a literal rock trailed about after the Israelites, pouring behind it a river of water through the desert. The ancient Jews taught that a river of water followed the Israelites, flowing with equal ease both uphill and downhill. These views are too fantastic for sober refutation.

In John 4:14 and 7:38, Jesus promised that a well of water should take its rise in each of his disciples. This of course, cannot be taken literally.

“This is my body,” said Jesus as he served the Lord’s Supper. Surely the disciples sitting at table with him knew they were not eating his literal body. But since then the scripture has been literally interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church and by Protestants such as Luther, who in the conference at Marburg, contending

for a literal interpretation, cried: "Christ has said, '*This is my body.*' Let them show me that a body is not a body. I reject reason, common sense, carnal arguments, and mathematical proofs. God is above mathematics" (D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, vol. 4, p. 96). When a man rejects reason and common sense he is liable to err.

The parables of Christ comprise so large a portion of the New Testament it is impossible to go over them separately. But it is common knowledge that they cannot be taken literally.

So far as a literalist can discern, the ordinance of baptism is a washing in water, a sort of elaborate method of taking a bath. But the apostle Paul taught that there is a symbolical meaning to the act. Spiritually interpreted it signifies the death of Christ and our participation in his death and burial (Rom. 6:3-11; Col. 2:12).

Likewise the Lord's Supper is not a mere consuming of food, but a memorial of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus (I Cor. 11:23-27).

It most certainly cannot be sinful to interpret at least some portions of the Scripture "spiritually"; for the writers of the New Testament, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, do that

very thing themselves, and that not seldom. Jesus did so when he taught that the brazen serpent was a type of Christ (John 3:14).

The writer of Hebrews taught that Melchizedec was a type of Christ's eternal priesthood (Heb. 7:1).

Jonah's deliverance was a type of Christ's resurrection, according to Matt. 12:40.

The manna typified Jesus as the bread of life (John 6:32).

The high priest was a type of the priestly office of Jesus (Heb. 9:7-20). And the paschal lamb typified Christ as the victim of the world's sins (I Cor. 5:7).

Christ terribly shocked the literalists in his following one day while preaching on the bread of life. He said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.” Great was the uproar in the assembly. “The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Here was a fair literal interpretation, made by good millenarians, too. Even his weak disciples took up the cry. “From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Later Christ himself interpreted his own words “spiritually”: “It is the Spirit that

quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (see 6th chapter of John). One pauses to wonder whether any of those who today so sharply criticize one for interpreting the Old Testament prophecies "spiritually" would have criticized Jesus for interpreting his own words spiritually.

At another time the followers of Christ misunderstood him by interpreting his words literally. Peter asked Jesus concerning John, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die" (John 21: 21-23). And this saying has gone out into all Christendom, the tradition surviving these nineteen hundred years, that the apostle John is traveling secretly somewhere throughout the world, thus to continue till Jesus comes again, all founded on a wrong interpretation of Christ's words, as John himself says.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4: 5). This scripture requires interpretation. Literally it would mean that Elijah is coming back to earth personally. The Jews—millenarians as they were—fully expected him to do so. David Kimchi said some

two thousand years ago, “God shall restore the soul of Elias, which ascended of old into heaven, into a created body, like to his former body: for his first body returned to earth when he went up to heaven, each element to its own element. But when God shall bring him to life in the body, he shall send him to Israel before the day of judgment, which is ‘the great and terrible day of the Lord’: and he shall admonish both the fathers and the children together to turn to God; and they that turn shall be delivered from the day of judgment” (Lightfoot’s *Horæ Hebraicæ*, II, p. 244).

But Christ interpreted this scripture “spiritually,” in Matt. 11:14. Concerning John the Baptist he said, “If ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.” Of course he was not the literal Elijah. The angel interpreted the matter spiritually when he said, “And he [John the Baptist] shall go before him [Messiah] in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke 1:17). Yet many premillennialists, disregarding Christ’s and the angel’s interpretation, expect—just as did the ancient Jews—that Elijah shall return to earth literally in his own person in the last days. Some expect him to bring Moses along with him when he comes.

A non-literal interpretation is required for

such allegories as the following: Vessels in a Great House (II Tim. 2: 20, 21), God's Building (I Cor. 3:10-15), The Good Shepherd (John 10), Leaven (I Cor. 5:6-8), The Christian Armor (Eph. 6:11-17).

In the fourth chapter of Galatians, verses twenty-four to thirty-one, the apostle Paul interprets the story of Sarah and Hagar "spiritually." He says that they stand for great spiritual truths. Some modern theologians criticize Paul very severely for using this method of interpretation. Some think he was swayed by his rabbinical teaching and habits of thought, and others suppose it was a kind of slip of the pen, as it were. So in this way many accuse Paul of making a great blunder here. Personally, however, I am not afraid to travel in the steps of this God-inspired writer of Holy Scripture. I would rather have one sentence or one example of his than a whole library of the "paper" theologians of modern times.



## CHAPTER V

### SOME MESSIANIC PROPHECIES AS INTERPRETED BY THE NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

The prophetic portions of the Old Testament are full of what seem to be references to the millennium. How can we know what they mean? Shall we refer the question to theologians or to the writers of the New Testament? When we turn to the New Testament we find these very scriptures quoted and applied by its writers to the gospel age in which we live, and interpreted as referring to the gospel privileges of our day.

As we read these we cannot fail to observe the glaring discrepancy between the interpretation adopted by the New Testament writers and the interpretation which the premillennial teachers put upon the same Old Testament scriptures.

To conservative Christians who believe, as does the author, that the Holy Ghost inspired the very words of the New Testament, it must be astounding to find uninspired men differing from them in interpretation of even one Old Testament passage. What a revelation it is to learn that not once do the writers of the New

Testament seem to fall upon the premillennial formula of prophetic interpretation. Time and again they apply the so-called millennial prophecies to our own gospel age. Can this be accidental, or due to oversight?

A person can hardly escape the conclusion that if the premillennial interpretation of the Old Testament prophecies is true, then the writers of the New Testament have missed the way and have misapplied and misinterpreted the Old Testament prophecies not once nor seldom, but again and again. Since this cannot be true, we believe the premillennial writers to be wrong.

Owing to lack of space, let us consider only a few of the many scriptures that are interpreted differently by New Testament writers and the teachers of premillennialism.

“In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:3). In the days of the Pentecostal church Stephen said: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” Stephen thought that blessing was for his age then and there, for he continued: “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his in-

iniquities" (Acts 3:25, 26). This shows that the blessing consisted in being turned from iniquity.

Paul taught that the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles of his day fulfilled that prophecy: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed" (Gal. 3. 8).

In contradiction to the interpretation of Stephen and of Paul, Dr. Gray says of the prophecy in Genesis, "This part of the promise also awaits complete fulfilment." Stephen and Paul make no hint of a merely partial fulfilment in their day. Dr. Gray supplies what he considers a defect in their teaching.

In Micah 4:11—5:15 we have a Messianic prophecy too long to quote here. However it is all one, as premillennialist scholars themselves admit. A portion reads as follows: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, tho thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel."

Matthew, the apostle of Jesus Christ, thought this prophecy was fulfilled at the first coming of Christ. Therefore in Matt. 2:5, 6, he applied this prophecy to that event.

Yet premillennialists apply all of the passage except two verses to the millennial age. Dr. Scofield says these verses are a "parenthesis." If so, it requires a premillennial bias to find it. It certainly would seem strange if the prophet were talking through many verses about the millennial age, then should suddenly turn back thousands of years, without a warning, and devote a few verses to the gospel age, then as suddenly revert across thousands of years to the millennial age again.

The passage "until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth," which literally would refer to the birth-pain of the virgin mother of Jesus, is, strange to say, generally "spiritualized" by premillennial writers to refer to the travail of the church or of Israel.

"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. 4:5).

If we are satisfied to accept Christ's interpretation we shall believe, "This is he, of whom it is written, . . . For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come" (Matt. 11:10, 13, 14).

Had it not been for Dr. Gray, we should have had no more light on this scripture than that

which Christ gave us on it. But Dr. Gray says in his comments on Malachi that John the Baptist "is to be considered the type of this forerunner." Christ says "John the Baptist is the forerunner mentioned by the prophet: Dr. Gray says he is the type of the forerunner who is to be expected in future time.

Dr. Scofield chops up the prophecy in Mal. 3:1 into two epochs which are at least two thousand years apart—no man knows how much longer. He says that Malachi did not see the separating interval consequent upon the rejection of the King. I should not wish to discuss Malachi's alleged ignorance with a premillennial scholar, but I should rather accept Malachi as he is with his alleged defects than to have him amended by either a "higher critic" or a "fundamentalist."

"Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." The foregoing is

a portion of the great Messianic prophecy of Isa. 9:1-7.

Turning to Matthew, fourth chapter, we read that Jesus changed his residence from Nazareth to Capernaum in fulfilment of this prophecy: "And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (vs. 13-16).

Here the Holy Spirit of inspiration and prophecy plainly says through the mouth of the apostle Matthew that Jesus' preaching in Galilee fulfilled this great prophecy. It would seem that this should be sufficient authority for all of us. But premillennial teachers tell us that the prophecy pertains to the millennium. Dr. Gray captions this passage in Isaiah: "The Second Coming of Christ 9:1-7," and says: "The last verse shows conclusively that the mind of the Holy Spirit is resting upon the millennial age."

Matthew's interpretation may not be deemed



“scientific” or “dispensational”—indeed I shall admit it seems rather old-fashioned, nevertheless it is sufficient.

“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert” (Isa. 35: 5, 6).

Christ taught that this prophecy was fulfilled in his own healing ministry, when he sent a comforting message to the trouble-pressed and suffering John the Baptist in order to strengthen his faith in the Messianic character of the work of Jesus: “Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached” (Luke 7: 22).

However, Dr. Gray does not agree with this view. Of the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah he says: “Evidently the millennium is once more pictured here.”

“That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the

Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust" (Matt. 12:17-21).

Here the Apostle quotes from Isa. 42:1-4. Dr. Gray concedes the first four verses to Matthew's claims, as referring to Christ's earthly ministry, but contends that verses 5-16 refer to Christ's "work among the Gentile nations which is still future."

But good old Simeon, under the inspiration of the blessed Holy Spirit, quoted from verse six and applied it to the infant Jesus: "A light to lighten the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32). Paul and Barnabas quoted from this same verse in Acts 13:47 as referring to the present dispensation. The glorified Christ quoted from the seventh verse in giving Paul his call to the apostleship (see Acts 26:18).

I would not be uncharitable, but merely call attention to the fact that Dr. Gray's view is here rebutted by Simeon, Paul, Luke, Barnabas, and Christ, surely a goodly array of authority.

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salva-

tion; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

Speaking of Christ's entry into Jerusalem, Matt. 21:4-5 says: "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, etc.," quoting Zech. 9:9.

This seems plain enough, but in Dr. Gray's Commentary he put Zechariah 9-14 under the caption: "End of the Age and the Opening of the Millennium." He teaches that these words were fulfilled 'at least in part' in the time of Christ, but await 'complete fulfilment' at Christ's second coming.

Dr. Scofield admits that verse 9 refers to what Matthew pointed out, but says, "Except in verse 9, this present age is not seen in Zechariah" (note on this passage).

"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed" (Ps. 2:1, 2).

Dr. Gray says: "In fact, this Psalm is one of the many millennial psalms spoken of at the beginning."

Luke and the apostolic company thought it was fulfilled in the persecutions of the present

age. The saints quoted the first two verses in their prayer recorded in Acts 4:25, 26 and applied them to their persecuted but victorious ministry in this Christian dispensation.

Dr. Scofield has a more elaborate analysis of this Psalm. He derives the entire millennial formula from it. Admitting that verses 1 and 2 refer to Christ's first coming and rejection, he contends that verse 7 refers to "The subjection of the earth to the king's rule," i.e., the millennial reign of Christ.

In this he also differs from Paul, who taught in the synagog at Antioch (Acts 13:32, 33) "That the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." This quotation is from the seventh verse of the second psalm.

"In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old: that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord that doeth this" (Amos: 9:11, 12).

This sounds like a prophecy of millennium,

and Dr. Gray says it is such. Following are his notes on these verses: “(1) the kingdom is to be restored (11); (2) Israel is to be head of the nations (12).”

Dr. Scofield gives these verses the following caption in the Scofield Bible: “Future kingdom blessing: (1) The Lord’s return and the reestablishment of the Davidic monarchy.”

This sounds plausible; but the whole argument is negatived entirely by the fact that James quoted this passage of prophetic scripture and applied it to his own age nearly two thousand years ago (see Acts 15:16, 17).

In Gal. 4:27 Paul quotes Isa. 54:1 to show that we are now children of the heavenly Jerusalem. Dr. Gray says Isaiah was here describing the millennium.

“What if God . . . endured . . . the vessels of wrath . . . . And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As he saith also in Osee, I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my

people; there shall they be called the children of the living God" (Rom. 9:22-26).

Here Paul quotes from two passages in Hosea—the first quotation is from 2:23 and the second from 1:10 of that Book, and he applies both quotations to our own gospel age. The proof of this is found in the fact that he is engaged in justifying the inclusion of the Gentiles within the Christian church in the present age. "*Even us whom he hath called.*"

Paul taught that this scripture refers to us. Peter understood the texts as referring to the church of his day (I Pet. 2:10).

Dr. Gray says millennial conditions are referred to in Hosea 2:23. Hosea 1:10 he refers to "The Better Day Coming." Dr. Scofield is of practically the same opinion.

If I may say so without offense, I think that the reason for the wide disagreement in opinion here between Drs. Gray and Scofield on the one hand, who say these scriptures refer to the millennium, and Paul and Peter on the other, who say these scriptures refer to the church in the present age, is because Peter and Paul for some reason or other did not follow the premillennial "dispensational" method of interpreting prophecy.



“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered” (Joel 2: 28-32).

Peter quoted this prophecy on the day of Pentecost and taught that the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit then was a fulfilment of that prophecy—in other words that the prophecy referred to the day of Pentecost and the present age. He said plainly, “This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel.” How he would have started to read in Dr. Gray’s Textbook on Prophecy (p. 124) that Joel was really writing about the Spirit to be poured forth in the millennial age!

Dr. Scofield also takes a hand in setting Peter right in his interpretation. He divides up the quotation and says that the words “And I will

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show wonders, etc.," refer to "the signs preceding the second advent, etc." He also informs us that there are several sets of "last days," some of which refer to the church in the present age and some to the "kingdom-age," or millennium. This is hard to believe.

## CHAPTER VI

### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PROPH- ECIES GIVEN BY PREMILLENNIALISTS AND THE WRITERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

First of all let me disclaim any personal reflection on the men whose writings I have compared with those of the New Testament writers. I have merely referred to these premillennialist writers because they are representative teachers of that theory. As public men they would never think of claiming exemption from examination and criticism of their works. Personally I have the highest esteem for these men.

When one reads the works of these men and of other premillennialist teachers, their minute and comprehensive knowledge of Scripture seems to give them the right to speak with authority. Can such good and learned men possibly be mistaken? The present writer has small confidence in theological authority. It does not take a very extensive knowledge of theological literature to find men of towering genius and giant minds on opposite sides of many questions. But for the satisfaction of such

as are impressed with the authority of knowledge and scholarship, we may refer to Dr. Snowden's test. He obtained official information from twenty-seven leading theological institutions in eight different denominations. Of the 236 professors and members of the faculties of these seminaries only eight were found to be premillennial. So far as scholarship goes the 228 professors who reject the millennium probably know as much as the other eight who accept it.

Should we judge that the premillennial teachers probably outweigh the others in piety and personal worth, if not in scholarship, we can only say that the most pious and worthy men are not always the most conspicuous, yet, much as we esteem the piety and worth of many of the prominent premillennial teachers, the weight of their names cannot certainly be allowed to surpass those of Origen, St. Augustine, Savonarola, Huss, Luther, Calvin, John Wesley, Dr. Clark, and multitudes of other great and holy men who did not believe in the millennium.

In the preceding chapter only a few of the discrepancies between premillennialists and the writers of the New Testament have been considered. In practically every place where the

writers of the New Testament quote or refer to the Old Testament they give a different light on it from that given by the premillennial writers. The seriousness of this fact seems never to have been pondered sufficiently. How can conservative Christians who believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God have the hardihood to interpret an Old Testament scripture in a manner at variance with the spiritually inspired interpretation of the New Testament?

The citations heretofore given are enough to make clear beyond doubt the fact of a certain discrepancy between the interpretation of the New Testament writers and that usually given by the premillennialists. Yet only a few of the many possible instances were furnished. Against this proved fact it is possible to make only two arguments. Premillennialists could conceivably say that the New Testament writers were in error. Like the Higher Critics they might aver that since revelation is progressive the New Testament writers did not understand the millennium as well as premillennial writers do today. This argument, however, they are logically precluded from making by the fact that the premillennialists, generally speaking are conservatives who teach the plenary inspiration

of the whole Bible, including, of course, the New Testament—that it is inspired of God, without error. Therefore they cannot take the ground that the New Testament writers were in error.

Their only remaining argument then is that both views are true, both that of the New Testament writers and of themselves. Whenever a New Testament writer says that a text presumed to deal with the millennium was fulfilled in New Testament time, premillennial writers will agree that that text was partially fulfilled then, but they assert such a text awaits complete fulfilment in the future, or millennial age.

Here it is relevant to ask whether it is showing due reverence to the holy Word of God thus to qualify its unconditional utterances. For example, the Lord Jesus Christ said that John the Baptist *was* “Elias, which was for to come.” Now we may believe that or we may not: I do. Is it reverential, or even respectful, to add to the word of Christ the qualifying statement that John the Baptist was only a “partial fulfilment” of the prophetic word, or to say, since Jesus said that John the Baptist was the forerunner predicted by the prophet that John the



Baptist was only a "type" of that messenger?

We must notice that there are some cases where both interpretations cannot be true. Take for example one of many, the prophecy in Amos 9:11, 12, in which God promises to "raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen." James, in Acts 15:16, 17, applies this prophecy to the spread of the gospel in the present day. According to his interpretation the tabernacle of David was being built in his time by the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls. If that was true then, it is true today. And if true today, then the tabernacle of David is now being built in China, Japan, Africa, and in all places where the gospel is preached. If that is as James says, then the prophecy in Amos does not mean that a literal Davidic house shall be erected in Jerusalem as premillennialists teach.

"The King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more" (Zeph. 3:15). In the New Testament we find this prophecy quoted and applied to Christ in this dispensation by Nathaniel in the very presence of Jesus: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel" (John 1:49). Did Jesus rebuke him for misinterpreting the Scriptures? No, Jesus commended him. And yet he was far wrong according to Dr. Scofield, who

tells us that this passage in Zephaniah "cannot refer to anything which occurred at the first coming of Christ. The precise reverse was true." Dr. Gray is of the same opinion. Is it not strange that Jesus commended this opinion of Nathaniel if it were not the true one? Dr. Scofield and Nathaniel contradict each other here. One or the other is wrong.

There is no escaping the fact that in many such places it is impossible to reconcile the views of New Testament worthies with the premillennialist writers. But if for the sake of the argument we suppose it to be possible that both the New Testament worthies and the premillennialists are right several questions arise.

We may ask: why then do the New Testament writers and the premillennial writers almost always take a different view of the Old Testament prophetic texts? Are not the views of the New Testament writers of sufficient importance to be reechoed and emphasized when they deal with so important a topic as Old Testament prophecy?

If both views are true, do not premillennialists believe, as shown by the emphasis they give, that the premillennialist writers have much more important and inspiring views of Old Testament prophecy than that given by the

New Testament writers; for the former seldom or never repeat the views of New Testament writers on the Old Testament prophets? If this be true, is it not strange that God should give more illuminating and helpful views on Old Testament texts to ordinary fallible men without such special inspiration as had the New Testament writers, than he gave by special inspiration of the Spirit to the holy writers of the New Testament writing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit?

A careful collation of New Testament quotations and comment on Old Testament prophetic texts will produce the impression on an unbiased mind that the writers of the New Testament were either ignorant of premillennialist systems and methods of interpretation or that knowing them they consciously ignored and rejected them. It is very hard for a premillennialist to get along by supposing both his view and that of the New Testament writers to be true. For if the interpretation which the latter so frequently put upon the Old Testament prophecies is true at all, it is only true by admitting the principle of "spiritual" interpretation. In other words, the New Testament writers "spiritualize" the Old Testament

prophecies, and in this sense only is there any truth in many of their interpretations.

For example, the promise to Abraham that "in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed," refers, so premillennial writers tell us, to the millennium. As has been pointed out previously, both Stephen and Paul taught that that prophecy was fulfilled today by the preaching of the gospel. Premillennialists are bound to admit this, so they say this prophecy is now fulfilled in part. Well, if this prophecy is now fulfilled in part, it is only spiritually; for the literal unbelieving seed of Israel is not now a spiritual blessing to the world.

That means that the New Testament writers "spiritualized" that prophecy, and just so far as their view is true so far is it proper to "spiritualize" the ancient prophecies.

James "spiritualized" the prophecy in Amos 9:11, 12 regarding the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David. His view has no validity whatever except insofar as it is spiritually true; for the literal tabernacle of David was not rebuilt then, nor has it been these two thousand years later.

Paul in Gal. 4:27 "spiritualized" Isaiah's great prophecy (Isa. 54:1). He says (v. 26),

“Jerusalem . . . is the mother of us all, etc.”  
This is only true spiritually.

If the principle of “spiritual” interpretation be admitted in the exposition of the Old Testament prophecies, then the whole premillennial system falls to the ground. Nobody knows this better than our premillennialist brethren themselves.

## CHAPTER VII

### A NEW RABBINISM

On their return from exile the Jews sought to apply the law of Moses to their society with unexampled faithfulness and zeal. Consequently there arose a class of teachers or rabbis who devoted their talents to its study and administration. These men early adopted a principle of traditional interpretation and created the fiction that God had given Moses an oral as well as a written law. This oral law was, they said, handed down by tradition through the rabbis. And since it explained and amplified the written law, it was in their opinion of greater authority than the written law itself.

Rabbinism was hard literalism. Destroying the spirit of the ancient law, it reduced the law to the form of a hard, dry mummy. The very words of the Bible being counted, they knew which was the central word. Their knowledge of the Bible was minute and exact, but uninspiring. If a copyist found a letter accidentally written smaller than usual he reproduced it in his copy exactly as he found it. These men created an enormous and highly complicated system of Bible study which required many



years to master. It was vain to expect to understand the will of God by merely reading the Bible.

Rabbinical literature and learning was a vast ocean which the trained scholar alone could sail; but it must be traversed before one could be other than ignorant and childish so far as Biblical knowledge was concerned. And such light and ignorant people were viewed with a fine scorn by the rabbi who had spent many years acquiring the mountainous weight of rabbinical erudition. Yet Christ denounced the rabbi.

"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes" (Matt. 11:25). Thus spoke Christ in exposition of the simplicity of the gospel truth as opposed to the complexity and seeming depth of rabbinism.

In modern times there has arisen a vast system of Bible study which in its literalness, complexity, traditionalism, reliance upon authority, assumed profundity, and profession of infallibility closely resembles ancient Jewish Rabbinism. I refer to the premillenarian system of Biblical interpretation.

At the fords of the Jordan stern treatment

awaited every man who could not frame to pronounce "shibboleth" aright, and who by reason of ignorance or crudity pronounced it "sibboleth" (Judg. 12:6).

Just so, the Bible-lover of today who is not acquainted with this vast modern rabbinical comment on the Word of God is exposed to hard treatment if he wishes to teach about Jesus. What right has he to tell about the Lord? He is one of the *am-ha-arets*, people of the land (a term used by the ancient scribes in contempt of the common people).

While the Word of God certainly means what it says, yet we feel that we have a right to object to the extreme literalism of the premillennarians, because there are different forms of human language and the symbolic and figurative, being often used in the prophetic writings, are just as true as any other. However, they are true only when rightly understood. They may through being literalized be utterly falsified. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

Without denying that there are many deep things of God, we still must feel that the complexity of the premillennial interpretation is against it. A glance at even a small volume such as Blackstone's *Jesus Is Coming*, is enough

to confuse and mystify the untrained reader thoroughly.

What with the great tribulation, the parousia, the rapture, the aions, the remnant, the revelation, eight covenants, seven dispensations, three comings of Christ, four judgment days, two endings of the world, several sets of last days, and three resurrection days, I submit there has been grafted into the simple Word of God an elaborate system of interpretation which could never occur to the ordinary believer through an unbiased reading of his Bible. This involved and technical mechanistic theology is only comparable to the great rabbinical lore and traditional interpretation which grew up in the Jewish synagogue and academy like fungi, over the dead body of the ancient Scriptures.

Authority was the note of rabbinic teaching, yet to be sure not the authority of the speaker but of some other famous rabbi. Fashions of speech change; Americans are not so polite as were ancient Orientals, yet there are a few names of premillennial writers whose views are repeated ten thousand times over. And just as the ancient rabbi prefaced his teaching with the remark: "Rabbi N. saith, etc.," so thousands of premillennial teachers, should they acknowledge the source of their discourse, would likewise have

to begin by saying, "Dr. N. says, etc." In fact, many times they do this for the same reason as did the ancient rabbis—they could not appeal to the Scriptures, but must hark back to a well-known doctor to bolster up their teaching.

The complicated, strained, and far-fetched interpretations of the premillenarians have an appearance of depth and profundity; so did the teachings of rabbinical tradition. The age does not favor assuming the lofty air of the ancient rabbi who would not speak directly to his audience, but through the medium of one or two interpreters, yet premillennialist teachers often adopt a pose of superior knowledge of the Scriptures which is only thinly veiled by the conventional courtesy of the public speaker. The preconceptions of premillennialism are not to be deduced from the simple language of Scripture, but require an erudite apparatus of study. Such was the case with rabbinism. Very few people really understand them, for they must be taught in the schools, as was rabbinical learning. The teachers of premillennial theories are gaped at by the wondering crowds who are at a loss to know how one head can hold all the dispensations, mysterious ages and eons, and subtle distinctions between the church and the kingdom.

I believe that this exegetical apparatus distorts rather than expounds Scripture. If I read aright, Christ is all. He is the center and the church is his bride. He is the head of the redeemed creation and the church is by his side. Scripture is rightly interpreted in the light of his unique personality and mission, that mission being to raise up a church in this age.

The rabbis taught an earthly reign of Christ. It was one of the most distinctive features of their teaching, the thing that caused the Jews to reject Christ, because they were looking for just such an earthly king and earthly reign as millennialists expect today. And because Christ could not morally satisfy their expectations they rejected him. Certain it is that millenarianism blinded the eyes of the ancient Jews. Pray that it may not blind the eyes of Christian men today.

Premillenarians say that this expectation of rabbinism was correct; and that Christ would have set up an earthly kingdom as they expected, were it not for the fact that the people rejected him and thus caused the postponement of his program for thousands of years.

We object to this conclusion because the people rejected Christ simply for the reason that he did not set up an earthly kingdom.

## CHAPTER VIII

### WHAT IS ISRAEL?

Most people assume that they know what constitutes Israel. But in view of the fact that the subject is given so much importance by premillennialists, and because of the various strange and absurd theories to the effect that the English nation is Israel, that the American Indians are Israelites, or that a certain little modern sect is Israel, it will be better to examine the question briefly for a correct understanding of the subject.

Abraham, leaving the idolatrous city of Ur of the Chaldees, worshiped one God in Canaan. Isaac, his son, carried forward the pious customs of his father. This family heritage of true religion was taken up by Jacob, one of the two sons of Isaac. At the fords of Jabbok, after many years of exile, Jacob prepared to reenter Canaan. Here God met him, and in the lonely watches of the night an unprecedented struggle occurred. Jacob wrestled with God. In the outcome God blessed him and gave him the name "Israel." The name is variously translated. It comes from two words signifying God



and contend. Schaff gives the meaning, "The prince that prevails with God."

With Jacob then the name Israel begins. It was applied thenceforth in succession to the family, tribe, nation, and race of which he was the progenitor.

But that race has passed through many mutations of history since the eventful night when Jacob wrestled with God. Following the reign of Solomon the ten northern tribes split off from Judah and Benjamin and founded the kingdom of Israel. This kingdom was destroyed by the Assyrians in 722 B.C., and its leading people carried away into Assyria. Much useless discussion has arisen as to what became of the lost ten tribes of Israel, and whether they may not suddenly emerge into public notice some day. One might as well ask what became of the rains of last year. In the first place only the wealthier people were carried away into Assyria. This must mean that the great body of the people actually remained in central Palestine. Many of these might have emigrated into the southern kingdom of Judah and become mingled with the body of the Jewish people. The larger portion of them, however, became mixed with the Assyrian invaders and formed the Samaritan race, which is only now dying

in central Palestine. Doubtless some of the captives carried away into Assyria attached themselves to the Jewish people. The remainder became assimilated by the swarming myriads of the population of western Asia, where their descendants are today indistinguishable from and really a part of the natives of the land.

After the loss of the ten tribes the kingdom of Judah persisted for more than a century; and naturally attracted to herself such members of the race of Israel as had pride in their race and were able to obtain access to the land of Judah. From this time, therefore, since the Jews really were Israelites, they alone inherited the name and fame of ancient Israel. In this way one can see how childish is the notion that the Indians are the "ten lost tribes," or that the English people constitute the descendants of the northern tribes of Israel.

But while the major portion of the Israelitish race was totally extinguished with the loss of the ten tribes, it must not be imagined that all remaining Jews are pure lineal descendants of the ancient patriarchs. Judaism is a religion as well as a race. Many heterogeneous racial elements have entered into the Jewish fraternity through proselytism, such as is represented in the Black Jews, Abyssinian Jews, and the like.

While these are not of the literal race of Abraham, they have full place in the body of Israel. The Jews of various old-world countries have drawn from the race-stocks of their respective lands for so long a time that several distinct and separate types of Jews have originated thereby.

Thus we see that the literal Israel of today is the religious and social group called the Jewish people.

The Bible is clear in its teaching throughout that God uses human instrumentality and agency to accomplish his purposes. He used Noah to build the ark, Abraham to lead the way to Palestine, Moses to deliver Israel, David to prepare material for the temple, and Solomon to build it. Saul was converted by an overwhelming vision of the face of the glorified Christ, but Christian men have always believed that the martyr Stephen was the outstanding human factor in his conversion. God sent an angel to give Cornelius light. However the light which he gave him was not gospel teaching at all, but the information as to where a competent human teacher could be found.

Much human preparation was needed before the wheat of God could be sown in the fields of history. All students of missionary work

understand this. Many faithful years of toil and high example must be given by the missionary to create a background for Christian teaching in the minds of backward people. The whole groundwork of the religious ideas and standards by which we, however faintly, grasp the plan of salvation was thus woven into the thought of the human race by the Providence of God through weary ages of time.

It was as if some Burbank should fence off a field in order to develop therein a certain type of wheat. The time will come when this wheat shall be broadcast over the earth, but just now it must be sedulously guarded and the process of developing the desired qualities carried on it may be for years until the expected result is gained. Israel was that field.

Or, to change the figure: Israel was the divine laboratory wherein the omniscient Chemist was to work out certain results of inestimable value to the human race. Paul expressed it somewhat in the same way. When referring to the law, which directed the development of the Jewish race, he said, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ" (Gal. 3:24). The "schoolmaster" (Greek, *paidogogos*) here is not a teacher, but a trusted slave who led the boys to the teacher.

The sun of revelation rose but slowly: first, the faint red gleams of patriarchal altar-fires, then the clouds and mists of the Jewish law shot through here and there with brilliant flashes of prophecy, and at last the bursting forth of the eternal Sun of Righteousness over the ancient world of sin.

The oak of the kingdom of God sprouted in the acorn of the tiny community of ancient Israel.

But of one thing we may be reasonably certain—all the wheat of the Christian world will not again be gathered together in the experiment-field of Israel. The divine Chemist will not repeat his age-long process in ancient Israel. The heavenly teacher will not again commit the human race to the tutelage of Israel and her law. The sun of revelation will not settle back slowly into the mists of the ancient Israelitish economy. The oak of the world-wide and heaven-embracing kingdom of Christ will not by a miracle of superhuman power be compressed into the tiny acorn of Israel again. We have not so learned Christ.

Some people expect God, through an arbitrary display of irresistible power, to overrule the stubbornness of the race of modern Israel and convert them against their will. If so, why will

he not do as much for the children of godly parents today? Experience and observation, as well as the Word of God, teach otherwise. Even ancient Israel was not chosen arbitrarily, but because even with their faults all things considered they were of all people the most amenable to the divine discipline. Even then they suffered for their sins with no hint of favoritism from the Lord. And many thousands—the major part of the race—were cast off utterly at the fall of Samaria, altho Christ had not yet come and they were not guilty of the damning sin of rejecting him.

Israel was the instrument of Jehovah to bring the light of the gospel of Christ to the world of mankind. Like the altar, the sacrifice, the temple, and the priest, it has passed away so far as being the appointed means used by Jehovah for the teaching of the race is concerned, and only persists ideally as a sacred figure of the larger brotherhood of the Christian life.

Under the old covenant, Israel was the wife of Jehovah: "For thy maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name" (Isa. 54:5). "Thou . . . hast not been as an harlot . . . . But as a wife that committeth adultery" (Ezek. 16:31, 32). As an unfaithful wife she is threat-



ened: "And I will judge thee as women that break wedlock . . . are judged" (v. 38). "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you" (Jer. 3:14).

The whole book of Hosea is constructed around this idea. Israel is the unfaithful wife of Jehovah; but she is to be reclaimed. "And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali" (Hosea 2:16). *Ishi* and *Baali* are two Hebrew words meaning "my man" (husband) and "my lord," respectively. *Ishi*, my man, was an expression more intimate and kindly than *Baali*, my lord. Besides, the term "Baal" had become applied to heathen gods.

In the interest of premillennial teachings, which gave earthly Israel a permanent place in the latter-day dealings of God with men, Dr. Scofield tells us: "That Israel is the wife of Jehovah . . . now disowned, but yet to be restored, is the clear teaching of the passages. This relationship is not to be confounded with that of the church to Christ . . . . In the mystery of the divine tri-unity both are true. The New Testament speaks of the Church as a virgin espoused to one husband (II Cor. 11:1, 2); which could never be said of an adulterous wife, restored in grace. Israel is, then, to be the re-

stored and forgiven wife of Jehovah, the Church the virgin wife of the Lamb . . . ; Israel Jehovah's earthly wife . . . ; the Church the Lamb's heavenly bride" (note in loc. cit.).

In using figures there is of course a certain amount of latitude allowable. But the learned Doctor creates a puzzle when he tells us as literal fact that Israel is the wife of Jehovah and the church the bride of Christ, when Jesus says, "I and my father are one."

This charge of polygamy against the Deity he seeks to soften by asserting the tri-unity of God. Israel, he says, may be God's wife and the church Christ's wife because of the fact that there are three persons in the Godhead. Upon the face of it this will seem unreasonable; for surely if there is one God he cannot have two wives at once. And the Scriptures repeatedly affirm the unity of the Godhead. That Christ and the Father are one is a truth too familiar to require scriptural citations.

Nor can we explain the matter by maintaining that the church is only destined to be the bride of Christ in the future. Figuratively it is true that our entrance into the glorified state will be as when we go into a marriage supper; and the glorified church will be "as a bride adorned for her husband." But these are only figures to

set forth that glory which the genius of man's mind cannot imagine. In literal fact we find that the church is even now wedded to Christ. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). This bridegroom is Christ, "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church" (Eph. 5:23). "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (v. 25). That this church is now married to Christ and bearing children in holy wedlock is proved by the text: "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26).

Altho one were using merely figurative language, yet because of the unity of the God-head it would be an inelegant and offensive metaphor to speak of God as having two wives at one time; one the wife of Jehovah, and one the wife of Christ. Happily we are reduced to no such straits as that. The imagery of the Bible was conceived in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and therefore it links together with infinite precision.

Paul clears up our difficulty here. Writing to men of the earthly race of Israel he declares in the seventh chapter of Romans that they are no longer bound by the marriage covenant of the

Old Testament. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband . . . . Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead" (vs. 2, 3). These men had been members of earthly Israel and under the law, but now they had died to all that and had their divorce from the old covenant, not through a court decree, but through death. Being joined to Christ by faith, his death was their death. Moreover, there are other scriptures which teach that the law was taken away at his death. That Paul here teaches the death of the law is the view of many of the church fathers, including Origen, Chrysostom, and Ambrose.

We are on Scriptural grounds and treading in the steps of godly Christian teachers of ages past when we say that when Jesus died on the cross the law of Moses died, the temple worship died, the old covenant died, the Jewish sabbath died, and the earthly Israel as God's earthly people and typical bride also died. The church of God is now the one and only bride of Jehovah or of Christ.

From the crucifixion onward the race, law, and

religion of Israel have been nothing but an empty form possessing no value except as types of the true Israel of God, the true temple of God, and the great Victim, eternal sacrifice upon the ideal altar of which that in Jerusalem was only a shadow. Therefore, we are not under the necessity of absurdly ascribing two wives to God. The wife of the Old Testament died with the death of Jesus on Calvary, and the wife of the New Testament, of which the former was only a type, is revealed in her ideal beauty the immortal and ever youthful bride of Christ.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RELIGION AND WORSHIP OF ISRAEL

Under the old covenant Israel had an elaborate system of temple worship consisting of sacrifices and ceremonies of great number and complexity, all rigidly prescribed with minute exactness by the Mosaic law. Bible readers will be sufficiently familiar with the nature of this worship without our giving a formal analysis of it here.

If the Old Testament prophecies of the revival of the worship of Israel are to be literally rather than figuratively interpreted, then we shall have the Jewish sacrificial system reestablished in Jerusalem and shall see the Christian church come to an end as a distinct institution, being supplanted by the Jewish sacrificial system. This bold position is frankly taken by many premillennialists today. Literal interpretation positively necessitates it.

Numerous Old Testament prophecies speak of a revived temple worship. One of the most circumstantial accounts is given in Ezekiel 40—47. We believe these refer to the spiritual worship of a holy church in the New Testament dispen-



sation. Premillennialists have had some trouble with these passages, as occasionally one balks at the idea of a restored Jewish temple. A few premillennialists have said that the restoration predicted by Ezekiel was conditional upon a repentance which was never shown by Israel, hence the promise lapsed and became ineffective. Far the greater majority however, almost all, in fact, of premillennial teachers, here remain loyal to the principle of literal interpretation and teach the revival of a human priesthood and literal sacrifices in earthly Jerusalem in the days of the millennium.

Dr. Scofield, in his Reference Bible captions Ezek. 40:1—48:35 as follows: "General Theme: Israel in the Land During the Kingdom Age." Dr. Gray's view is "that we have here a prediction of the temple that shall be built in the millennial age . . . . A strong objection to it exists in that sacrifices and feasts are referred to, which seem contradictory to Christianity. But it should be remembered that Christianity is not meant, but a new dispensation with Israel on the earth while the church is in the air with Christ."

Professor Snowden cites Dr. Nathaniel West, Rev. W. E. Blackstone, Dr. W. B. Riley, Dr. I. M. Haldeman, Dr. C. K. Imbrie, Dr. W. G.

Moorehead, Dr. C. I. Scofield, Dr. R. M. Russel, and Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, all as accepting the doctrine of restored sacrifices. He quotes Dr. Morgan as follows: "Palestine, reinhabited by the nation of Israel, is to be redivided; and each tribe will return, not to the section of land previously occupied, but to a portion which stretches from the seaboard across the land. Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and will possess a temple far larger and more magnificent than before, the size of which is given by Ezekiel. The city will not merely be the seat of rule exercised over Israel; but the metropolis of government for the world-wide worship of God. In the past its sacrifices and oblations pointed on to Christ; but these, restored in the millennium, will be offered in memory of the work which Jesus accomplished by his cross" (God's Methods with Man, pp. 117, 118).

A premillennialist journal publishes an account to the effect that the Jews have already instituted a course of instruction to train young men of priestly descent for the duties of the temple worship. It is confidently expected that when the temple is rebuilt there shall not be wanting priestly ministrants of proper lineage and training to relight its altar-fires and resume its pompous liturgy.

One cannot say positively that the Jews will never resume their temple worship, altho the prospects in that direction in view of the revival of Turkish prestige in western Asia seem more than doubtful. True there is a sort of tradition in the Christian church that the temple can never be rebuilt. And Eusebius has a passage describing how the workmen were driven away by awful balls of fire after they were sent there by the apostate Emperor Julian to make void the words of Christ by rebuilding the temple in order to reinstitute the temple worship. Yet Christ did not positively say the temple would never be rebuilt. He merely said that it would be thrown down until not one stone would be left upon another. It is evident, however, that the church in Julian's age regarded the proposed rebuilding of the temple as a reflection upon Christianity. And that was Julian's sole motive. The Christian church has been marching away from the Jerusalem temple for two thousand years. It seems strange to talk of turning around and marching back to it.

There are several reasons why this cannot be. First there is the difficulty of literal fulfilment. Following are some typical prophecies which are very precious to me and which I believe refer to the glory of spiritual Israel in

the Holy Ghost dispensation. Quite reluctantly I must show the consequences of interpreting them literally, in a fleshly, earthly sense. Remember, I would not detract from the dignity of these scriptures, but merely show that an interpretation of them which is absurd and contradictory cannot be the true one.

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Isa. 2: 2, 3). This is a beautiful prophecy of a unified and victorious church in the last days.

In the last days all nations must come to Jerusalem to worship every sabbath. “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord” (Isa. 66: 23). “And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the

Lord of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain'' (Zech. 14:17). I do not believe this is to be understood literally, but that it rather refers to the spiritual worship of all the earth in the new Jerusalem, the church of God.

If taken literally, it would seem difficult for all the families of the earth to go to Jerusalem to worship and back home to far-away points like Australia. I will perhaps be told that air-planes will remedy that. They can make the trip.

But this will not do, according to a literal interpretation of the prophecy—the only one the premillennialists will have—for we read again: "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord out of all nations upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord'' (Isa. 66:20). So they cannot possibly come in air-planes; they must come on mules, swift beasts, and such things. True, it might be maintained that air-planes will carry both the mules and their riders, but this view seems so improbable that I doubt if it will have many advocates.

This prophecy is true. It is literal or figurative. The issue is clear-cut. Taken literally—excluding the air-planes hypothesis—it would mean that people should ride mules and drive

chariots from Australia, North and South America, and the Islands of the Pacific into Jerusalem. Moreover, the mules of the millennial age—if these scriptures are to be literally interpreted—must be of extraordinary swiftness, for they must go to Jerusalem and back every week. That is, taken literally, these mules must make the return trip from, say Australia, Hawaii, and South America, over the ocean to Jerusalem every week continuously in time for the Saturday temple service, for the literal Sabbath in the Bible is always Saturday and never the Lord's day, or Sunday.

Further, if the literal interpretation be followed, there will be quite a goodly number of mules and chariots and swift beasts in Jerusalem every Friday afternoon, for the verse says that "All flesh" shall come to worship before the Lord. There are some nineteen hundred millions of people on earth now. Two thousand million would be a modest estimate for the population of the earth in the expected millennial age, altho I really think there would be fifty times that number if we should have a millennium. I have never stopped to figure it out, but I should think that Jerusalem would be somewhat pressed for room if two thousand million pil-



grims with all their mules and swift beasts should suddenly arrive in one day.

I am an old-fashioned believer in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. I believe them to be God-breathed and inerrant, in every sentence. If this scripture is to be taken literally, then I shall expect either that the ocean will dry up so as to let the mules through or that the water will be solid so they can tramp upon it like stone. Nothing daunts my faith if I know what God promises to do. But I do not understand that such is his purpose. While nothing is impossible with God, it scarcely seems probable that these scriptures are to be taken literally. More likely they refer to the spiritual worship of the human race arising to God in every tongue and from all lands continuously—a scene indeed worthy of prophetic vision.

## CHAPTER X

### THE JUDAIZATION OF THE WORLD

The literal fulfilment of the prophecies quoted in the preceding chapter would involve nothing less than the Judaization of the whole world, for we read: "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isa. 52: 1).

Dr. Scofield captions this "Vision of Jerusalem in the kingdom-age." Now it is so simple that a child cannot misunderstand it that if "all flesh" and "all the families of the earth" must come up to Jerusalem to worship, and if no uncircumcised can enter, then it follows that "all flesh" and "all the families of the earth" must be circumcised—and consequently Judaized—or the Scriptures cannot possibly be literally fulfilled.

In a prophecy assigned by premillennialists to the millennial age we read: "Thus saith the Lord God; No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, *nor uncircumcised in flesh*, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel" (Ezek. 44: 9).

These scriptures make it *positively* certain that if they are to be fulfilled literally in the expected millennial age, then "all flesh" and "all the families of the earth" must be circumcised.

Yet the Word of God teaches: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2). Therefore, if these scriptures should be fulfilled literally in an earthly millennial reign, it is *positively* certain that Christ should profit us nothing, for the Word of God cannot be broken, and this is what it says. The literal interpretation of these prophecies here creates a contradiction in the Word of God and nullifies the eternal priesthood of Jesus. For that reason it leaves us unconvinced.

However, that is not the end of contradictions in the literal interpretation; for "all flesh" will not go up to Jerusalem, and the whole world will not be Judaized, as there will be vast multitudes of heathen who will worship God with a pure worship using incense and offerings in every place. We read: "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall

be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. 1:11). Of course, literally, this would mean that heathen people should offer bloody sacrifice and burn incense in every place throughout the world. Literally both sets of prophecies cannot be true, but figuratively, Jerusalem is everywhere; all nations come up to it daily, and yet offer incense in every place throughout the world.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, who expect an earthly millennium, nevertheless understand this scripture as having to do with the spiritual worship of the nations of the earth. It is hard for literalism to be consistent in the field of Old Testament prophecy. The foregoing contradictions cannot be reconciled on the basis of literalism. Whatever explanation is offered, we still have bloody sacrifices to deal with. Practically all modern premillennialists expect Ezekiel's temple to be built and its bloody sacrifices to be offered. To understand the prophecies here figuratively would vitiate the whole theory.

Reechoing the opinion of premillennialists of an older day, Dr. Scofield, in his Reference Bible (p. 890) tells us: "Doubtless these offerings will be memorial, looking back to the cross, as the offerings under the old covenant were anticipatory, looking forward to the cross."

Perhaps a better answer to this theory cannot be written in brief than one given by one of the older premillennialist writers, the Duke of Manchester, who is quoted by Dr. David Brown as follows:

“Perhaps the advocates of the restoration of sacrifices would say they are to be commemorative or eucharistic; *I say this view appears more objectionable than the spiritual hypothesis, because that only evades scripture, this opposes it;* for the object of these sacrifices is expressly declared—they are for him that erreth, and they are to reconcile, to cleanse, and to purge (Ezek. 45: 20; 43: 20; 46: 20). If they were intended as eucharistic, they would not be called ‘sins’ and ‘trespasses’; they would rather be called ‘peace’ and ‘thank-offerings’; but we have these mentioned also (45: 17, *margin*), and distinct from the ‘sin’ and ‘burnt-offerings’ . . . . I think it possible that the prophecy of Ezekiel may in part become the *occasion* of those Jews who reject Messiah having recourse to those ‘beggarly elements’; AND I THINK IT A SUBJECT OF VERY GRAVE CONSIDERATION, WHETHER WE CHRISTIANS MAY NOT PUT A STUMBLING-BLOCK IN THE WAY OF THE JEWS, BY ADMITTING THAT THE RESTORATION OF SACRIFICES,

AFTER THEY HAVE BEEN DONE AWAY IN CHRIST, CAN BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WILL OF GOD. . . . To think now of reestablishing any sacrifices which must be done away in Christ, would be *utterly unsuitable to the church; it would be turning again to the weak and beggarly elements; therefore all that portion of Ezekiel's vision which refers to them, to use the apostle's expression, must have grown old. . . .*

"I find in prophetic language sacrifices used figuratively, to denote prayer (Ps. 141:2); praise (Ps. 54:6; Jer. 17:26; 33:11); thanksgiving (Ps. 107:22; 116:17); joy (Ps. 27:6); righteousness (Ps. 4:5, 51:19); confession (Ps. 66:13); contrition (Ps. 51:17); judgments (Isa. 34:6; Ezek. 39:17-19; Zeph. 1:7, 8). I find that *some of the instances adduced by the advocates of literal sacrifices, if taken literally, would prove more than those advocates would admit, for they refer not to the Jews but to Gentiles, e. g., Isa. 19:21; 56:7; Mal. 1:11.* And when I find in the New Testament that believers are a royal priesthood (I Pet. 2:5, 9) and, as priests, partake of the altar (Heb. 13:10; I Cor. 10:16, 21) as priests offer spiritual sacrifices, whether of praise (Heb. 13:15) and good works (Heb. 13:13, 16; Phil. 4:18) or whether



of themselves either in life or death (Rom. 12: 1; 15: 16; Phil. 2: 17; II Tim. 4: 6) I am induced to believe that the prophets refer to the spiritual and reasonable services indicated by the typical ordinances, *rather than the beggarly elements themselves.*"

"Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin offering: they shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish" (Ezek. 43: 25). When the priest "goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin offering, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. 44: 27). These and like passages show that the sin offerings and sacrifices were identical with the Jewish sacrificial system.

Does not the simplest Christian know that these were typical and were done away in Christ? That is the whole theme of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to Christians in danger of apostatizing to Judaism. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. 9: 13, 14).

This offering needs never to be repeated in any form. "But this man, after he had offered ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS FOREVER, sat down on the right hand of God" (Heb. 10:12). The sacrifices of human priests were offered continually year by year (Heb. 10:1). The sacrifice of Jesus is offered continually (see Heb. 10:12, where the same Greek phrase is used as the 'continually' of human priests in 10:1). The priesthood of men continued only year by year, but the priesthood of Jesus continues forever (Heb. 5:6; 6:20; 7:17; 7:21). In each of these the Greek puts it "a priest unto eternity." The sacrifice of Jesus was offered once only in historic time, but it is perpetually bleeding and smoking on the eternal altar of God. What other sacrifice can ever stand beside it?

"But this man, because he continueth ever [Greek eternally] hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7:24). The ancient priesthood faded and passed away, being replaced by the eternal priesthood of Christ. "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? For the priesthood *being changed*, there is made of ne-

cessity a change also of the law'' (Heb. 7:11, 12).

To anyone who has ever read the Book of Hebrews it would seem superfluous to explain that the Levitical priesthood has passed away forever, being replaced with the eternal priesthood of Christ. That is the whole theme of Hebrews. It was written to forestall the apostasy of Jewish Christians back to earthly sacrifices and away from Jesus, the eternal priest of the new covenant.

The literalistic interpretation of the Book of Ezekiel certainly leads to strange results. According to it the Levitical priesthood must be revived also: "But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, *they shall come near to me to minister unto me*, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood'' (Ezek. 44:15).

That does not sound much like Christianity if it is understood to signify earthly sacrifices by Jewish priests. It is NOT CHRISTIANITY, Dr. Gray tells us. Giving the view of another writer, he also expresses his own opinion, as follows: "While Israel is to return to the land, and be converted and blessed, it will be still as Israel, *not as Christians*. In the present dispen-

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sation all believers, both Jews and Gentiles, belong to Christ in heaven, where such differences are unknown, but when this prophecy is fulfilled, and Christ's reign begins on earth, *the distinction will be again resumed*" (Christian Workers Commentary, p. 265. Italics mine.) In the same work (p. 266) after explaining that an earthly temple is to be built in the millennial age, he says: "A strong objection to it exists in that sacrifices and feasts are referred to, which seem contradictory to Christianity. But it should be remembered *that Christianity is not meant*, but a new dispensation with Israel on the earth while the church is in the air with Christ" (my italics).

The peculiar fascination that lies in this doctrine is here well exhibited in making earnest Christian men teach something else besides Christianity for some future age. This something else is not, however, as Dr. Gray thinks, a new dispensation. Ezekiel taken literally teaches the revival of the Levitical priesthood, as we have already clearly proved. The priesthood of Christ is eternal. There is no room for the revival of the Jewish priesthood. "Wherever he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Talk about Christianity passing and a new dis-

pensation taking its place! Christ is the essence of Christianity. As long as he lives to intercede for his people (which is eternally) so long will Christianity last. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Christ says, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." And again, "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (John 10:9, 1).

These scriptures are not quoted to unchristianize our premillennial brethren, but to show that there can never be any other dispensation or way of salvation forever except through Christ. It is astounding to have good men tell us that Christ is to rebuild the walls of partition between Jew and Gentile once broken down through his crucifixion; that the Christian economy is to pass in favor of a revived Judaism; that the blood of bulls and goats is to flow again for the sins of men in the very city where Christ Jesus offered up his precious life for the sins of the world.

Kindly it must be said that herein do good men unwittingly cancel, not only the Book of

Hebrews, but practically the whole New Testament. We say with the poet:

“Thou, O Christ, art all I want.”

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself” (Heb. 7:27).

A great deal of stress is put upon the idea of a new dispensation. But this expected new dispensation would be nothing but the revival of ancient Judaism. If this theory is true we had better be circumcised ourselves and lead our children into the synagog. The chances are likely to be better, at least for our children; for probably not all of them will accept salvation through Christ at all. But if they should become members of the synagog, when the millennium dawns they could be saved without becoming Christians. And they would be members of an earthly aristocracy which will rule the world. Premillennialists tell us the millennium is about to dawn at any time. At present any of us can become members of the synagog and just as much a Jew as any other through proselytism. When they come to rule the world they may be



less willing or even entirely averse to welcoming members.

It is possible to believe that we shall have fresh and greater revelations of the glory of Christ in the ages to come. But we cannot think that God will ever compress the eternal and spiritual kingdom of God back into the dead and broken shell of Jewish ritualism and formalism once done away in Christ, or that the truths to be revealed in the future will make false the truths already taught in the Word of God.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NATION OF ISRAEL AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Israel is the burden of much premillennial teaching. It must be very comforting to an unbelieving Jew to read premillennial literature and to be told that even if Christianity should prove to be true, then Israel is soon—perhaps in the lifetime of this generation—to rule the world. Gentiles who reject Christ must suffer the fearful consequences of their error; but the unbelieving Jews are so dear to the God of Israel that their triumphant rule over the world is possibly only the matter of a few years' time.

What motive for present acceptance of Christ does this offer the Jew? He wins, whichever religion is true. If Judaism be true, of course he is safe; and if premillennialism be true, he has all to gain anyway by remaining in that Israel which premillennialists tell us is so dear to God. We must believe according to this system that earthly Israel stands higher in the regard of the Almighty than even the church of Jesus Christ; for the latter is only saved conditionally by obedience and faith, while the former is predestined to be saved in spite of its

unbelief—"still as Israel, not as Christians" (Dr. Gray, *Christian Workers' Commentary*, p. 265).

The church is dear to God because believing and obedient and only while it is so. But Israel is dear to God altho unbelieving and disobedient; and shall remain so throughout all time. Verily, brethren, here is predestination in its flower. Here is some other basis of acceptance with God than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Can these things be so?

A study of the Book of Hebrews reveals the typical nature of Old Testament institutions. In the light of that fact we are warranted in saying that the nation of Israel is simply typical of the kingdom of God. Like the temple, altar, sacrifices, and law of the old covenant, Israel as a literal chosen people of God has passed away.

I shall be told that the literal nation of Jews is still on earth, a standing miracle of history. Yes, and the Chinese are still in existence, yet their history dates its beginning far beyond Abraham. The Japanese are older than the Jews. The Arabs have preserved their identity throughout ages of time; and the Samaritans—true descendants of ancient Israel, have an unbroken history clear back to Abraham himself. What is more to the point, however, is that the

law of Moses is still in existence. It has not literally "passed away," and moreover, it is still religiously observed by the Jews. Yet to the Christian it has passed away.

Now the physical existence of Israel or the Jews is no more proof that they have not "passed away" spiritually, so far as being the chosen people of God, than the physical existence of the Mosaic law is proof that it has not passed away spiritually, so far as being the binding letter of literal obligation. Both have served their historic purpose in the economy of God's plan and both remain as figures of the better things of the New Testament.

It is altogether possible, and it would not be as unreasonable to expect as some archeologic discoveries already made—that the very furniture of the ancient temple of Solomon may be found. Such venerable relics as the altar, the candlestick, and the table of show-bread, would certainly command the thoughtful respect of Christian men; but they would not be holy for Christians as they were for the ancient Jews. They would be interesting mementoes of God's ancient dispensation and types of the holy altar, Christ, of Christ the perpetual bread of life, and of Christ the light of the world.

The altar was "most holy" (Exod. 29:37).

Mount Zion was holy, the cities of Judah were holy, "Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation" (Isa. 64: 10). The chosen people, the Israel of God, was holy: "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself" (Deut. 7: 6).

Are the cities of Judah holy today in any but an ideal sense as types of the spiritual land of Canaan? No. Are the Jews—who deny Christ—a holy nation today? To answer yes is to deny Christ also; to answer no is to acknowledge the truth that they are not now the chosen people, but only a relic, a type of the true Israel of God.

Whoever opens his concordance and turns to the word "parable" is likely to get a new impression of the manner and method of divine teaching. The word "parable" is from a Greek word which means the placing of one thing beside another for purposes of comparison. "Likeness," "comparison," "the kingdom of God is like." This is not only the favorite method of Oriental teachers, but it is shown to be the principal manner in which God reveals his truth to us. More than twenty times in the Gospels does the Holy Spirit use the word "parable" in des-

cribing to us the method of Jesus' teaching. But that is only a hint of the great number of times in which this method of teaching is used by the Holy Spirit in the Bible.

The whole story of the Old Testament, while historically true, will be found nevertheless to be comparable with something else. Its hard shell contains an inner kernel of spiritual reality. This is doubtless the true clue to the spiritual meaning of the history of Israel. Her nationalism was a type of the kingdom of God or of the present church. This was the view of the apostles and writers of the New Testament. We shall be satisfied to stand with them rather than with those "deep students of the Word" who have gone so far beyond them.

The spiritual nature of Israel began to emerge in the Old Testament. From the very beginning it must have been manifest that there was something spiritual in the nature of that chosen people whom God began to raise up of the seed of Abraham. They took their rise, not according to the manner of ordinary human tribes, but in the election and choice of the Almighty. Abraham had many children, but "in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Faith was the very origin and genesis of the nation according to Old Testament accounts.



Moreover, the nation developed altogether according to an ethical and spiritual norm, and elements hostile or unsympathetic to that norm were sloughed off, either gradually by drifting away into heathenism, or violently as was the case with Esau, and the sons of Korah, with Nadab and Abihu, the northern tribes, and the host of those who were executed in accordance with the law of Moses. Israel was a "holy nation," and the wilful sinner must die. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses" (Heb. 10:28).

Israel was the conservator of a divinely prescribed type of worship. She found the meaning of life in that worship. On her altars glowed and blazed the very genius of the people of Israel. In all these things how different was she from the Jewish race of today, how like the spiritual Israel of God!

The spiritual nature of Israel began to be revealed to the Old Testament writers. I believe I could prove this point to unbiased men most reasonably and logically by pointing out the ideal and spiritual concept of Israel which began to develop in the Pentateuch, or books of Moses, and came to flower in the prophetic writings. However, inasmuch as many or most of these scriptures would be held by premillennialists to

describe the Israel of millennial days, I shall point out what cannot be denied or evaded, that under the increasing light of revelation the ideal and symbolic nature of the national religion of Israel became increasingly manifest. Inasmuch as the whole structure of nationalism was founded on the religion and drew its whole meaning therefrom, it follows that the nation had the same meaning as the religion and served the same ideal and spiritual purpose.

“I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he goats out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof. Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most high. . . . Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation [Hebrew, way] aright will I show the salvation of God” (Ps. 50: 8—14, 23).

The foregoing is respectfully referred to our premillennial brethren for consideration while

contemplating the expected revival of Jewish bloody sacrifices.

Of similar import is the following: "The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?" (Prov. 21:27). "For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word. He that killeth an ox is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol" (Isa. 66: 2, 3).

Many premillennialists expect the Jews to resume their temple service at Jerusalem. It seems that we have here a divine estimate of what such service would amount to at the hands of Jews who reject the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

"For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps. 51:16, 17).

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or

bullock that hath horns and hoofs" (Ps. 69:30, 31). "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6). "To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice" (Prov. 21:3).

"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God; Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:6-8).

With such heavenly flashes of sunlight as these and many other scriptures we might quote did the Holy Spirit illumine the letter and form of the ancient Israelitish worship with the sense of an inner spiritual meaning of which they were even at that early day recognized as merely symbols and types.

It is in the New Testament that we see the true Israel emerging into clearer view. It is as if a great building had been in process of construction and the real building were partly

hidden by the scaffolding. At length the scaffolding is removed and the building appears in its own clear beauty. That building is Israel, and the scaffolding represents outward, literal Judaism, or the Jewish race. While there were many faithful promises that the true spiritual Israel should abide before God forever, yet he gave earthly Israel many warnings that they should be cast off and rejected: "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him" (Hosea 9:17).

Whole pages of Old Testament prophecies to this effect could be given, but the point is conceded by premillennialists, who assert at the same time that this literal Israel shall be restored. The point to remember, however, is that the true Israel of God abides continually, only there is a change in its constituency, in the personnel of its citizenship.

America is an illustration. Proud old families of pre-Revolutionary and Anglo-Saxon stock boast of their Americanism, but the Syrian and the Turk naturalized only yesterday are just as much Americans as they. Some of these old-stock Americans have denationalized themselves and have taken the citizenship of other countries. The immigrant of alien race who stood in court only yesterday and with faltering tongue took

the oath of allegiance to the United States is not only more American than they—he is altogether American and they are not American at all, even tho their ancestors came over on the Mayflower and fought in the Revolutionary War. The convert who only last night repented and believed in Christ is not only a better Israelite than the unbelieving Jew—he is altogether an Israelite, and the unbelieving Jew is no Israelite at all in any Scriptural sense.

Jesus forewarned of this transfer of citizenship in the eternal Israel of God. “Therefore I say unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation [*ethnos*] bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). This nation, *ethnos*, “race,” is that “holy nation,” *ethnos*, mentioned by Peter (I Pet. 2:9). Paul, writing to Gentiles, asserts plainly that the unbelieving Jews were taken from the tree of Israel and the believing Gentiles were grafted in. This tree is the ideal Israel from which the Jews have been removed. “Because of unbelief they were broken off” (Rom. 11:20). If broken off they are no longer members of Israel and have no claim on its promises or hope for its high destiny. “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: neither, because



they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children" (Rom. 9: 6, 7).

Jesus denied to unbelieving Jews any place in the true family of Abraham: "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham . . . Ye are of your father the devil" (John 8: 39, 44). I maintain that the true Israel is just as real as it ever was, and that it inherits the promises of Israel, and that Christ's words cut off the fleshly Israel from these promises. Christ says again that these literal Jews are not considered Jews any longer by himself. He classifies them as "of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie" (Rev. 3: 9). How can that literal Israel have a high place in the regard of Christ and be destined to lordship of the world by him when he denies their right to be called the children of Abraham and brands them as of the synagogue of Satan?

John the Baptist warned against trusting in literal Jewishness: "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham" (Luke 3: 8). The remark about stones was a prophecy of the transfer of sonship and citizenship in the real Israel to the hard-hearted Gentiles.

Jesus lauded Nathanael as "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile" (John 1:47) that is, a true Israelite. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter" (Rom. 2:28, 29).

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law [as literal Jews now have it], but through the righteousness of *faith* [as spiritual Israel has it today]. For if *they which are of the law* [i. e., literal Jews] be heirs [as premillennialists say they are] *faith* is made void, and the promises made of none effect [that is, the promise is made ineffective if applied to literal Jews] ... Therefore it is of *faith*, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law [Israelites under the Old Testament dispensation] but to that also which is of the *faith* of Abraham; who is the father of us all" (Rom. 4:13, 14, 16). Here Paul rules the fleshly Jews out of Israel and includes believers only. If any good thing is to happen to Israel in the last days, these believers are the sole and only heirs to the promises thereof.

“Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise” (Gal. 4:28) wrote Paul to the Gentile converts in Galatia. To them he said plainly, “And if ye be Christ’s, *then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs* according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). The next time you read in premillennialist writings of the wonderful promises to Israel, remember these words of Paul as to what people shall inherit these promises. “Know ye therefore that *they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham*” (Gal. 3:7). “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (I Pet. 1:23).

“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ” (Gal. 3:16). The seed, “Christ,” which inherits the promises, is not alone the historic Jesus, but all those redeemed by him who are ideally members of his body.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TRUE CIRCUMCISION AND THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS

Circumcision was the very foundation stone of the nation of Israel. Without it any man was cut off from Israel. By it properly administered, Negroes, Chinese or men of any race might become Jews and full members of Israel. If circumcision was symbolic, then the nation founded upon it was also symbolic. The Old Testament writers early perceived the symbolical and spiritual significance of the ordinance of circumcision.

Moses, in his humility confessed himself to be of uncircumcised lips (Exod. 6:12, 30). There may be some who would maintain that it is possible to cut and circumcise the lips with a knife; but I prefer to think the sense is spiritual here. Jeremiah complained at the unbelieving Jews of his time: "Behold, their ear is uncircumcised" (Jer. 6:10). Jeremiah did not mean to intimate that they needed to have their ears cut with a knife.

We read of circumcision of the heart in Lev. 26:41 and Ezek. 44:7. "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart" is the promise in

Deut. 30:6. This must be spiritual. "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah" (Jer. 4:4). At the risk of being called an infidel by literalists, I must understand that spiritually, as I do not think there were surgeons in Israel competent to cut off part of the hearts of living Israelites with safety.

It is a great mistake to regard Israel entirely as a race and forget or deny that it is also and principally a church. A man born of Israelitish parents was not (Scripturally) an Israelite if uncircumcised; but circumcision made a man of any race a perfect member of Israel. Therefore the Holy Spirit, even in Old Testament times, began to cause the spirit of the true Israel of God to disengage itself from the body of Jewish nationalism. There was a spiritual circumcision which made a man a member of the spiritual Israel of which the earthly Israel was only a type.

The absolute and positive transfer of citizenship in Israel from unbelieving Jews to believers in Christ of all races is shown by the transfer of circumcision. The rite of circumcision is indispensable to Israel—no circumcision, no Jew. Paul speaking by the Spirit of God entirely and forever abolished fleshly circumcision: "Cir-

cumcision is nothing" (I Cor. 7:19). Neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh" (Rom. 2:28). "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but *faith* which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

In these and similar sayings he canceled fleshly circumcision, and in so doing he abolished the Jewish nation as a chosen people and as the Israel of God. Henceforth they are no different than Japanese, English, or Americans so far as fitting into God's plan of the ages. Not race or family, but circumcision makes a man a member of Israel. "And the uncircumcised manchild whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, *that soul shall be cut off* from his people" (Gen. 17:14). It follows that the unbelieving Jews of today are all cut off from the house of Israel, according to Paul, because not one of them has a valid circumcision according to his teaching.

Has this point ever been sufficiently considered by those who prophesy so great a future for the Jews? In point of fact they do not belong to Israel at all. A "bogus" court might falsely give an alien citizenship papers and pretend to enfranchise him, but it would have no validity. He would be as much an alien as ever. According to Paul the circumcision administered by the rabbi has not been valid for nearly two thousand



years. Where then is earthly Israel? Scripturally speaking there is none, that is, none to whom God extends any favors except such as he offers to the whole human race.

If the earthly Jews are not of the house of Israel, who is? Let Paul answer. Writing to the converted heathen of Philippi, he says: "*We are the circumcision*, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. 3: 3). Would that our premillennialist brethren had less confidence in the glory of fleshly Israel. To the former heathen of Colossæ he points out the only valid circumcision today: "In whom also *ye are circumcised* with the circumcision *made without hands* . . . by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2: 11).

If the Jewish circumcision is no longer valid and if the heathen people of Philippi and Colossæ were circumcised with the circumcision of Christ—which must be valid—does it not follow that the converts to Christianity become the true Israel of God, the only Israel there is today? Earthly Israel of today is only a counterfeit, according to the teaching of Paul, but such as it is, it does not consist solely and entirely of the blood and race of ancient Israel. Modern Israel is a church—a spurious church from the Chris-

tian standpoint, but a church nevertheless. Into this church have come representatives of many races of men, and while the Jews are not keen for proselytism, yet it is still theoretically possible for men of any race to become members of earthly Israel by circumcision. I have heard of Negro Jews here in the United States.

Now, if God has such special care for earthly Israel and if they are going to rule the world, would it not pay these various races—or any of us—to forsake Christ (for one must forsake him to become a Jew) and enter Judaism today while he can? This is a fair inference from premillennialist teaching concerning Israel.

W. E. Blackstone, author of the famous premillennialist book, *Jesus Is Coming*, addressing a Jewish Zionist meeting said that there were three courses open to every Jew: “The first is to become a true Christian . . . . Not many Jews will do this.” Now if a Jew will not accept Christ and become a true Christian, what hope does the gospel hold out to him? Just what it does to every other man—no hope at all. But premillennialism has another way to escape much more attractive to the flesh. Blackstone continues, “Second: Become a true Zionist and thus hold fast to the ancient hopes of the fathers, and the assured deliverance of Israel through the coming

of their Messiah, and complete national restoration and permanent settlement in the land which God has given them."

Into what abysmal depths of error can a good man fall! Could anything less seductive than premillennialism induce a Christian man to offer to Jews or anyone else any other alternative than to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior now? Not one word can one find in the New Testament offering Jews the choice of accepting Christ or "holding fast to the ancient hopes of the fathers." Instead, the apostles taught, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men [not even the famous name of Zionism], whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

Such teaching makes us shudder lest good men whom we love and honor should make themselves obnoxious to the solemn words of Paul addressed to those who were preaching Judaism in the first century: "Tho we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:8). Even if not convenient, it is at least humanly possible for any man who reads this to become a Jew outwardly and thus partake of the "ancient hopes of the fathers" so precious in the eyes of premillen-

nialists. But Paul says: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Gal. 5:2). Nevertheless he would profit the proselytized Gentile exactly as much as any Jew, "for there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Rom. 10:12). Peter told the Jerusalem council that he had found in preaching to the Gentiles that "God . . . put no difference, between us [Jews] and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9).

Is it possible that an unbelieving Jewish rabbi can make a Christian Chinaman, Negro, or any one else a member of Israel, of God's chosen people, by causing him to apostatize from the Christian religion and deny Jesus Christ, while Christ cannot do as much for one who believes on him? The apostles taught that no man had anything to gain by accepting circumcision.

The writer of Hebrews taught in the sixth and tenth chapters, using the sternest language in all literature, that a Christian who apostatized to Judaism committed an unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost and was hopelessly lost. But according to the teaching we oppose he would become a member of God's chosen people, and if the millennium came soon enough, he would be

accepted of God "not as a Christian," would help bear rule over the whole world, his former Gentile friends bowing at his feet, and would participate in the sacrificial worship of the rebuilt Jewish temple. According to Scripture, however, he could not possibly be a Christian, for "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle" (Heb. 13:10).

Zion was a mountain in Jerusalem, and the word became a sort of poetical name for Jerusalem, holding the beloved city in the light of ideal holiness and beauty. It is to be the headquarters of Judaism, premillennialists tell us. Unfortunately for that claim, the seed of Christ have already arrived at that very place, and the literal seed of the Jews can never disinherit them: "But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:22, 23).

This is the Zion to which the true Israel were to be gathered "when the Lord shall bring again Zion" (Isa. 52:8). This is the Zion of which the prophet said, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness"

(Isa. 1:27). This has already come to pass, for Paul writes that "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all" (Gal. 4:26). Tho redeemed at terrific cost, thank God, she and her children, or converts, are free. This is the holy Jerusalem which John saw depicted in her final glory "descending out of heaven from God" (Rev. 21:10). It is the Jerusalem in which "every pot . . . shall be holiness unto the Lord" (Zech. 14:21).

If ever a man lived to whom Israel meant much it was Paul, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, but in the strong white light of revelation he saw that all believers in Christ were fully members of Israel. This is what he says of the former heathen converts of Ephesus: "Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision . . . . That at that time ye were without Christ, being *aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*, and strangers from the covenants of promise . . . . But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ . . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:11-13, 19). Here Paul teaches clearly that these uncircumcised heathen con-



verts are no longer aliens from the commonwealth of Israel. They belong to Israel; they are Israel, "the Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

One cannot escape the conclusion that Christian believers certainly are members of Israel. Since they are not members of Judaism, Judaism must not be Israel. If there be two Israels, then Christians belong to the true Israel of God, and can let whosoever will belong to the other kind, for it is certainly the true Israel of God to whom the promises of prophecy apply.

That the members of Christ are the true Israel is proved by the fact that they are priests. No one but an Israelite can possibly be a priest. The priesthood lies at the heart of Israel; and to say a man is a priest, and yet not of Israel, is a monstrous thing. "And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh shall be put to death" (Num. 3:10). The priest must have an unbroken genealogy clear back to Abraham. On the return from Babylon certain priests were put from the priesthood because of a lack of this genealogy (Ezra 2: 61, 62). As well deny that the senators and President of the United States are American citizens as deny that a priest is a member of Israel.

But all believers are priests, according to the teaching of the New Testament. John, the beloved disciple, ascribes praise to Jesus Christ, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us [*aorist*, not will make] kings and priests unto God and his Father" (Rev. 1:5, 6).

Peter writes: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 2:5). The true priesthood is spiritual; the true sacrifices are spiritual; the true Israel is spiritual; and there is no other. Again Peter writes: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood" (I Pet. 2:9).

These priests offer their own bodies (Rom. 12:1), the sacrifice of praise (Heb. 13:15) their means (Phil. 4:18), and their prayers (Rev. 5:8; 8:3).

Thus it has been shown beyond cavil that believers are members of Israel. The objector may assert that this language is figurative; in other words he may "spiritualize" it. To this we reply "Amen; therefore the only Israel that God acknowledges today is the spiritual one."

If he say that there are two Israels, the earthly and the spiritual one, we shall answer

that the spiritual one is the Israel of God and consequently the true one, the one which inherits all the ancient promises of God. Why concern ourselves about the spurious one? It has no place in God's plan any more than any other race of men.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL

Whoever has taken the trouble to read the foregoing exposition of the true Israel must be in no doubt by now as to what the restoration of Israel will be. Nevertheless since many even of non-millennialists expect the restoration of the Jews, it will be profitable to give some attention to the subject.

At the outset let us understand that even if it should prove true that earthly Israel will be converted and restored to Palestine, that would not establish the premillennial theory. Some of the strongest writers against premillennialism have expected the conversion and restoration of the Jews. The issue does not hang on the Jews.

It would take us far beyond the limits of our space to examine all the scriptures given by premillennialists to prove the future restoration of the Jews. One prominent writer cites some eighty odd references which if they should mean what he wishes them to mean would prove the point so fully as to make objections seem blasphemous.

Doubtless most Bible students have observed that the Old Testament dispensation promised

earthly blessings largely. Israel should have good crops and success in war if only they were obedient. But a child can see that the New Testament promises spiritual blessings mostly. God's rain falls *alike* on the just and the unjust and his sun shines with *impartial* brightness on the evil and the good, so far as this life goes. In fact, quite often it is the good man who is a Lazarus and the evil one a Dives. This was the salient point in that parable which made it seem striking to the men of Christ's time.

This difference between the Old and the New Testament dispensations is so marked as to warrant the observation that most of the prophecies concerning Israel which were due for fulfilment during the existence of earthly Israel were fulfilled literally, such as the return from Babylon. But after the earthly Israel ceased to exist as such, being replaced by the spiritual Israel, it is necessary that these prophecies due to be fulfilled in that dispensation should be fulfilled in the Israel which God recognizes as replacing ancient Israel, and of which ancient Israel was only a type—namely the Israel of God.

Moreover, according to fundamentalist theology, it is unimportant to ascertain what the prophets themselves thought the prophecies

meant, but what did the Holy Spirit mean? For the prophets spake by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost things far beyond their own vision. They were as messenger boys bringing messages they could not always understand. Sometimes they studied their own writings in order to find out what some of the precious things were which the Spirit had put therein. "Of which salvation the prophets have *enquired and searched diligently*, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: *Searching what, or what manner of time* the Spirit of Christ which was *in them did signify*, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but *unto us* they did minister" (I Pet. 1:10-12).

The prophets told all about Christ's first coming, but doubtless not one of them understood whereof he spoke. They may have thought that their inspired utterances pointed to the restoration of literal Israel. We know that practically all ancient Israel so understood them. In fact, that is why the Jews rejected Christ—because he did not literally fulfil the prophecies as they had anticipated. Premillennialism simply carries the ancient Jewish position into the present time and says that those prophecies



will be fulfilled as *the Jews expect* later on. What an encouragement that must be to the unbelieving Jew to find his own position sustained by earnest and zealous Christians. He might say, "After so long a time they have admitted that part of my contentions are true. They may admit the rest later on."

It is the firmly held conviction of the writer that the Bible is the Word of God and that every word of the original manuscript was set there in exact order by the omniscient mind of the Spirit of God. This belief in verbal inspiration instead of leading to a belief in the literal fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies rather compels the view that they were never meant by the Holy Ghost to be taken literally; for to do so involves contradictions and absurdities inconceivable in the omniscient Spirit of God. He was always working in clear light; the ages of ignorance meant no diminution of his knowledge. But he did use language according to the ordinary laws of language; metaphor, simile, parable, figure, allegory, irony, sarcasm, poetry, and song.

The following references set forth scripture which premillennialists think apply to the millennium, but which require to be interpreted figuratively: "That thy foot may be dipped in

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the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same" (Ps. 68:23). Dr. Scofield says this refers "to the regathering of Israel, and the destruction of the Beast and his armies." Doubtless it does if "the beast and his armies" are spiritual and are conquered by a spiritual Israel. But the Doctor is thinking of literal Israel spilling the physical blood of the Goyim (Gentile nations) including among others the sons and brothers of Americans. It is hard to oppose such a view without feeling, but remembering the well-known piety of our premillennial brethren, we remind them that Christ is never going to call his children to fight for him with shot and shell, poison-gas, and murderous weapons.

"Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord" (Ezek. 36:1). This language is plainly figurative. Mountains cannot hear.

In Isa. 30:26 we read that the sun shall be seven times brighter than now. This would be destructive to life on earth; yet we read in Isa. 60:19 that we shall not have any sunlight at all in that time. Beautiful figures, but distressing, taken literally.

"And I will bring the third part through the

fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (Zech. 13: 9). This language is all plainly figurative.

"And they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children *forever*: and my servant *David* [not Christ] shall be their prince *forever*" (Ezek. 37: 25). Premillennialists tell us this is the millennium—that it will last a thousand years; but this reign will last "*forever*." The word is repeated often in the chapter. Premillennialists have a hard time compressing "forever" into "a thousand years." Yet under their system this is easy to do.

Of the Israel of that day it is said: "They [the Gentiles] shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet" (Isa. 49: 23). A beautiful figure of a penitent's humiliation and confession of sin—no more.

In the thirty-ninth chapter of Ezekiel is a prophecy of the mighty battle between truth and error in the last days. Gog and Magog are to be smitten with judgment. Concerning Gog we read: "Thou shalt fall upon the mountains of Israel, thou, and all thy bands." The spoil of weapons will be so great that "they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall

take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire." The mighty host of the slain will be so great that "seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them." Even then, they will not have buried all of them, for "they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth."

The literal interpretation of this passage presents no difficulties to Dr. Gray. He thinks that the passage refers to an attack upon Israel by the Russians after the return of Israel to Palestine. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, however, altho premillennialists, and believing in the literal glory of Israel, evidently see no great virtue in consistency of interpretation. Now they interpret the prophecies literally, now spiritually. At this point the literal interpretation is too much for them. They write: "The objections to a literal interpretation of the prophecy are—1. The ideal nature of the name Gog, which is the root of Magog, the only kindred name found in Scripture or history. 2. The nations congregated are selected from places most distant from Israel, and from one another, and therefore most unlikely to act in concert,

Persians and Libyans, etc. 3. The whole spoil of Israel could not have given a handful to a tithe of their number, or maintained the myriads of invaders a single day. 4. The wood of their invaders' weapons was to serve for fuel to Israel for seven years! And *all* Israel were to take seven months in burying the dead! Supposing a million of Israelites to bury each two corpses a day [working with modern methods and machinery they could doubtless bury one hundred each in a day] the aggregate buried in the 180 working days of the seven months would be 360 millions of corpses [many times more than were slain during the entire four years of the World War]! Then the pestilential vapors from such masses of victims before they were all buried! What Israelite could live in such an atmosphere? . . . The gross carnality of the representation of God's dealings with his adversaries is inconsistent with Messianic times; it therefore requires a non-literal interpretation'' (Comments on Ezekiel 39).

Bearing in mind that Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown are ardent premillennialists, the present writer hopes for a little grain of charity from premillennialists in criticizing him for pleading for a non-literal interpretation of Old Testament Messianic prophecies.

From the way premillennialists quote Old Testament prophecies of Israel's restoration and apply them to the far-distant future one would suppose they were altogether unaware of the historic return from Babylonian exile and restoration of the land under its post-exilic rulers, including the brilliant rule of the Asmonean princes. This fact cannot be ignored in any sober study of the prophecies. *Every single one of them* was written either before this era or during its continuance. If the prophecies predicted a restoration and that restoration subsequently came to pass, then do not their prophecies refer to the event that followed their utterance?

They prophesied a restoration. That restoration came to pass; and under Alexander Jannæus, Jewish high priest and ruler, Judea equaled in extent and power the old kingdom of David itself.

Two objections will be made to this application of the Old Testament prophecies to the return from exile and the restoration era which followed.

First, Blackstone quotes Isa. 11:11 that the Lord will set his hand to recover Israel "the second time." That "second time," he says is in the future, even to us. One must wonder that



such a statement could be soberly offered to Bible students, when it is matter of common knowledge that Isaiah wrote long before the return from Babylonian captivity. The deliverance from Egypt was the "*first time*" the Lord set his hand to deliver Israel; and the return from the Babylonian exile was the "*second time*" he set his hand to deliver Israel.

Second, it will be said that in the prophecies concerning the restoration there is a quality of universality and spirituality that seems to transcend the feeble light of Asmonean prosperity as the sun surpasses the faint light of the glow-worm. Granted. And for two reasons this is true: even in the post-exilic restoration the glory of the spiritual triumph was far greater than the splendor of the literal restoration of Israel. And the literal restoration was a kind of divine parable of the spiritual restoration in which the church of Jesus Christ, the spiritual Israel, should enjoy the full glory of Old Testament prophecy.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE ISRAEL PASSAGE IN ROMANS

In order to grasp the meaning of the Israel passage in Romans (chapters 9—11) it is necessary to bear certain facts in mind.

Altho the Bible is an inspired book, it was written by Orientals in a style to which Western people are unaccustomed. If one stops to think, scarcely any of the doctrinal passages of the book are written in the style we should naturally expect. Paul and the other writers do not use the language of our age. They do not say what we expect them to say when treating of a subject perfectly simple and concerning which there is no controversy and no doubt of their meaning.

The difficulties of evangelical theologians in finding proof-texts for their positions do not arise as is sometimes alleged because evangelical doctrine is different from that of the New Testament; for even hostile critics admit that the doctrines of evangelical Christianity are in fact the teachings of the New Testament.

Such difficulties, if any, arise from the fact that the style of approach to a subject is different in these different ages and times. The formal doctrines of the New Testament were

delivered to the hearers by word of mouth. The writings which followed later upon the conversion of the people often made only incidental allusion to what was quite well known through the constant repetition of oral teaching. Moreover, the emphases of teaching were different from those of today. Matters in dispute then have long been settled. Questions which never troubled them now agitate us.

In view of these well-known facts, patent to all, believer and infidel alike, the great teachers of the church have long ago formulated a rule for interpreting scriptures which has met with practically universal acceptance. This is called the analogy of faith. That is, scripture should not be interpreted to contradict itself. Obscure passages and those hard to be understood should always be interpreted in harmony with plain and straightforward passages elsewhere. One passage whose meaning is in dispute should not be made to contradict a number of others which plainly state an unequivocal proposition. When a passage cannot be interpreted without doing violence to the language, it is better to acknowledge ignorance than to create new difficulties which would not exist in the light of clear knowledge.

Now, Paul plainly taught the abolition of the

Mosaic law—the basis of Jewish nationalism. He taught the non-validity of fleshly circumcision, without which circumcision there can be no real Jew anywhere. He further taught that Jewish sacrifices had ceased to exist so far as God is concerned; that the fleshly Jews are not Israel; that Christians are now the Israel of God; that believers are priests; and that the old national distinctions are forever ended. According to Paul, believers are the true seed of Abraham and a Jew is one inwardly, circumcision is of the heart and believers constitute the commonwealth of Israel. Is it not strange that after admitting all this, objectors ask us to believe that Paul completely reversed himself in the Roman Letter and prophesied the revival of a fleshly Jewish nationalism? If an honest interpretation of his words makes all this necessary we shall say amen. But is that possible?

For an answer let us carefully study the Israel passage in Romans, beginning with the ninth and continuing through to the end of the eleventh chapters of that wonderful Book. In the early part of the Book of Romans Paul sweeps away every trace of hope in Jewish nationalism for his Hebrew countrymen, proving them equally under sin with the Gentiles,

with only one hope of salvation—that of accepting Christ by faith as Abraham did.

The question then will arise: What about God's covenant with Abraham? Has God's promise to Israel failed, then? Beginning with a conciliatory introduction in the ninth chapter, Paul sets himself to prove that God's promise to Abraham is fulfilled in believers in Christ. "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are *counted for the seed*" (Rom. 9:8). *Logizetai*, "counted," is a bookkeeper's term. Its use here suggests that God is keeping an account of the seed of Abraham, but only the spiritual seed are checked up in the reckoning. He shows that the promise was never intended for all the literal seed, because Ishmael and the other literal children of Abraham (Gen. 25:1, 2) were cut off forever, leaving Isaac alone to inherit the promise. And even of the seed of Isaac, Esau was cut off, leaving Jacob sole inheritor of the promise.

The ten tribes were cast off forever for disobedience. They were vessels marred in the potter's hands. In the same way God is about to destroy the Jewish nation that he might make known his glory on the vessels of mercy—the Christian believers, Jews and Gentiles (v. 24).

Hosea had prophesied that God was going to raise up another people for himself, including strangers and Gentiles (vs. 25, 26). This quotation from Hosea puzzles premillenarians, altho in reality it is one of the strongest proof-texts they have to prove the restoration of earthly Israel. Here, as so often, Paul interprets the prophets differently from premillenarians; for he applies these passages in Hosea to the salvation of the Gentiles in this dispensation. Grammatically and literally the texts do refer to Israel, but who among us can deny Paul's right to "spiritualize" them and apply them to the spiritual Israel of God chosen from among the Gentile races, as he does here?

Isaiah is quoted to show that only a remnant will be saved of the multitudes of Israel. Earthly Israel has not attained her desire because of unbelief but has stumbled, according to prophecy, but the goal of prophecy has been reached nevertheless by those whom they despised.

In the tenth chapter Paul continues his discourse. He yearns for the salvation of Israel. But earthly Israel seeks this salvation by works unsuccessfully, whereas even by Moses' own teaching it must be received by faith. Putting it on a basis of faith leaves room for the



Gentiles. Paul asserts there is no difference between them and the Jews, now under the gospel. Both are equally lost: both are equally salvable. The conversion of the Gentiles is in fulfilment of prophecy a means to provoke the Jews to rivalry, a prophetic voice summoning them to repent.

In the eleventh chapter, the Apostle continues: "Hath God cast away his people?" Has the promise failed? Is God unfaithful? That cannot be. Paul himself is of Israel. God has not cast away the people whom he foreknew. But which is the people whom he foreknew? Spiritual Israel. He goes on to show that at a time when earthly Israel were almost wholly apostatized God had an unseen elect people—a spiritual Israel who were true to him. Even so at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace consisting of both Jews and Gentiles. Just as the seven thousand comprised the true Israel in the days of Elijah, so this remnant of the election of grace is the true Israel whom God regards now.

The term "election of grace" shows that the remnant consisted of believers, both Jew and Gentile, as Paul so often asserts. God's promise now rests not on works, but is of grace. Earthly Israel has not obtained what it sought

for and what it would have a right to expect if the promises were literal. But the election, both Jews and Gentiles, have already obtained; and the rest are blinded, or hardened. The prophets prophesied this ages ago.

God has set a stumbling-block before fleshly Israel in the same way that every misused opportunity in our lives is a stumbling-block. If they had approached this in the proper spirit they might have risen on it to a place of blessing and leadership in the new Israel of God, but since they stumbled over it, and it thus became a penalty for their sin, it is proper to ask if it is God's purpose to cause them to fall. No, such is not the case.

It so happens that the very thing they stumbled over is no other than the gospel of salvation through a crucified Christ, by which means God is admitting the Gentiles to the privileges of Israel. If the Jews alone should have been saved to Christ according to the literal meaning of the Abrahamic covenant, they would have closed the door to the Gentile "remnant" of spiritual Israel, and thus the promise, altho literally fulfilled, would have failed so far as God's actual purpose was concerned.

On the other hand, if they had accepted Christ and become amenable to teaching as was Peter,

thus allowing the conversion of the Gentiles, then they would not have stumbled over the gospel and fallen as they did. But since they stumbled over this opportunity which God put before them and fell, they were compelled to renounce claim to leadership of the true remnant of Israel, and thus the way was opened for the preaching of the gospel to the Gentiles and their consequent admission to the Israel of God.

“Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” However, there is mercy even here, for it is God’s purpose thereby to provoke them to jealousy (*parazelosai* from *parazelloo*, i.e. “to provoke to rivalry”) that they might become aroused and grasp the precious opportunity which others were so freely enjoying.

This fall was connected with the closing of the Old Testament dispensation and the ushering in of the New Testament dispensation, which includes the opening of the privileges of the chosen people to men of all nations. Yet the fall of the Jewish people was not inevitable. They had opportunity to accept, but since they rejected, full advantage is taken of that fact to push the work among the Gentiles. Their fall, which was contingent upon their disobedience and was not predestined and inevitable, has thus

been turned to a blessing upon the Gentiles. How much more will their conversion (which is also contingent upon condition) in whatever degree it may occur in history, "if they abide not in unbelief" (showing their acceptance is not predestined and inevitable) result in blessings to the world? This has been fulfilled to some extent at least in distinguished converts from Judaism to Christianity such as Neander, and many others who have been a great blessing to the world.

The fall mentioned in verse 11 is the same tragedy referred to in verse 25. "Blindness [*porosis*, 'hardening'] in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved."

This blindness (Greek, "hardening") is a judicial punishment for sin inflicted by God upon those who continue to reject his mercy. In the very nature of the case it could not possibly rest upon the Jewish infants and children, for Jesus taught that all children are of the kingdom of heaven. And Paul teaches as a distinct point in his theology that all children are saved in infancy through the atonement of Christ: "Even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life" (Rom. 5:18). If these words of Paul are

true of "all men" it must surely be in infancy, and this precludes a judicial sentence upon Jewish infants.

Only a part of the Jewish people were afflicted with this hardness. "In part"—*apo merous*—cannot mean that all the Jewish people were partially hardened, for numbers of them were converts to Christ. It must, therefore, mean that part of the Jews were hardened. What part? The leaders and mass of the Jewish nation who rejected the person of Christ and the preaching of his disciples.

Paul has illustrated this hardening in a previous part of the Israel section (9:17, 18). Pharaoh stood in the way of the admission of God's ancient people to their privilege of forming a holy nation for him. After giving him space to repent, God hardened him and preserved him (Hebrew, *heemadhethiyka*, "I caused thee to stand" [Exod. 9:16]. Septuagint—*dieterethes*—"thou hast been preserved,") for an example of infinite justice. In like manner the generation of Jewish leaders who crucified Jesus and forbade the Gentiles to enter their privileges as the Israel of God were hardened and preserved for God's awful wrath which fell on them in A.D. 70, destroying their temple and nation.

How long would this hardening last? Every Egyptian king for weary ages of time was a pharaoh. God hardened Pharaoh's heart. Which pharaoh? All of them? No, only the one who sought to frustrate the founding of the nation of Israel. The remainder were nearly all hostile to Israel and in a sense were doubtless hardened personally, but only one opposed God's plan at a critical time and thus became the object of a stern judicial sentence such as befell the Pharaoh of the Exodus. For generations the leaders of the Jews have been hostile to Christianity, but only one generation opposed God's plan at a critical time, as did Pharaoh of the Exodus, and that was the generation that rejected Jesus personally and sought to prevent the founding of the Christian church at a time when the matter was, humanly speaking, in doubt.

This hardening was connected with the offense of the Jews spoken of by Paul in verse 11 as temporary. "Have they stumbled that they should fall?" *Pesosai*—"hopeless ruin"—is here contrasted with *auton paraptomati*—"their fall," or "their slip." The word means to trip or misstep. Scholars generally consider that Paul used it here as a milder word than the previous one. Its use distinguishes the



temporary nature of the punishment from the hopelessness of irrevocable doom for the Jewish people. This would hardly seem to be the case if it has lasted, as some say, for two thousand years and overwhelmed the numberless millions of the passing generations of Jews.

This judicial hardness inflicted by God was a result of the sin against the Holy Ghost and was practically the same penalty as the writer of the Hebrews warned against in the sixth and tenth chapters of that book. It was personal, not collective. Then as now, it made the case of the individual victims hopeless. It was temporary as far as the nation was concerned, because it rested as a curse upon that generation of Jewish rebels, just as it rested as a curse upon the individual Pharaoh.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE FULNESS OF THE GENTILES

The penalty of judicial hardness inflicted by God upon the nation of Israel was only to last "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." This is interpreted by premillennialists to indicate some deep esoteric mystery concerning the finishing of the full number of Gentile converts in all history. Dr. Gray says: "'The fulness of the Gentiles' (Rom. 11:25) means the completion of God's purpose in them at that time, i.e., the whole body of Christ, the church, will have been called out from among them, and caught up to meet him in the air.'" However, a few lines above this he writes concerning the "fulness of Israel" in the same chapter of Romans as follows: "Throughout this warning there are several intimations of the restoration of Israel as a nation (vs. 12, 15, 16). This is what is meant by their 'fulness,' etc."

Herein is a most extraordinary exposition. The "fulness of the Gentiles" means, according to Dr. Gray, the time when no more of them can be saved, for their full number will have been accomplished. But the "fulness of Israel" means just the contrary, the time when no more

of them will be lost, but all will come into the fold. It seems unlikely that the same expression in the same chapter should have an exactly opposite meaning in each case.

More probably "the fulness of the Gentiles" refers to the historical moment when Gentile Christians gained unequivocally their full freedom in the Christian church by complete victory over Jewish objections and no Jewish prejudice effectively hindered admission of Gentiles to the Israel of God. This fulness of opportunity speedily resulted in a numerical superiority of Gentile converts over Jewish in the church. Thus the Gentiles had fulness of entrance, fulness of privilege, fulness of freedom, and fulness of influence by reason of fulness of numerical strength. Doubtless this was "the fulness of the Gentiles."

This stage of development was reached in the first century, during the lifetime of the generation of Jews who resisted the founding of the Christian church, and thus it coincides exactly with the moment "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. 11:25). God's judicial sentence against that generation reached its historical climax at the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Here the great part of the hardened

Jews met their doom as Pharaoh met his punishment in the Red Sea.

Never again did the Jews interpose any effective opposition toward the admission of Gentile converts into the church. Moreover, the human administration of the church was thenceforth altogether in Gentile hands. Undoubtedly the fall of Jerusalem and the loss of control of the church through the fulness of the Gentiles marked the culmination of God's judicial sentence of "blindness" or "hardening." Such Jews as have not been saved since then have not perished because of a national sentence forbidding them to come to Christ as premillenarians hold, but just like other men, through their own individual failure.

A suggestive use of the word *pleroma*—"fulness," is found elsewhere in the Bible. In Matt. 9:16 the English reader reads: "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for *that which is put in to fill it up* taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse." Here, for the expression, "that which is put in to fill it up," the Greek reads *to pleroma*. Similarly in Mark 2:21, "the new piece that filled it up," is *to pleroma*.

A great number of the Jews were apostatizing from the Israel of God and the bringing in of

the Gentiles was necessary to fill up the number of the true Israel. "The fulness of the Gentiles"—*to pleroma ton ethnon*—was the Gentiles necessary to fill up the depleted ranks of the Israel of God in that day.

Many theologians have upheld a most astonishing theory with regard to the judicial blindness inflicted upon Israel at the time when the fulness of the Gentiles came in. They maintain that that terrible sentence is still resting upon the Jewish nation and is even now operating to prevent its conversion.

What a revolting view of God it is which will assert that he is preventing the Jews from being converted today in order to punish them for the murder of Jesus which happened two thousand years ago. The penalty that was inflicted upon the Jewish leaders for that crime fell upon the guilty individuals alone two thousand years ago. The penalty for crucifying Jesus and hindering the progress of the infant church was national, not as involving every individual of the nation in its guilt, but because the leaders and responsible heads of the nation were concerned in it; just as the action of a cabinet or premier is a national action, altho the persons acting may be only three or four, or even one man, because these few people are

acting in an official capacity. Since the fall of Jerusalem, however, the Jews have ceased to be a nation, and no body of men has ever had authority to bind them to any action as a nation since that time.

The apostle limited the duration of the sentence of "blindness" or "hardness" against the Jewish nation with the utmost clearness. In language as exact and unequivocal as that of a judge sentencing a prisoner he said that this hardness should last "until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in." Therefore, if the "fulness of the Gentiles" came in during the first century about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, there is no reason to believe that the judicial sentence of hardening lasted beyond that time.

The objection then will arise, "Why are the Jews still unconverted?" Not all of them are unconverted. Almost numberless thousands of Jews are falling away from the synagogue and gradually merging with the unchurched multitudes from which come constant accessions to evangelical Christianity. For the rest it is not necessary to suppose a special curse which prevents their conversion. It is exceedingly difficult to convert Mohammedans—perhaps as much so as Jews. Their religion arose six hundred years after Christ. No special sentence



excludes them, yet they are quite as unapproachable as the Jews. I dare say it is fully as hard to convert the Roman Catholics to evangelical Christianity as it is the Jews. Individual hardness of heart arising from systematic anti-evangelical teaching is sufficient explanation in either case.

Altho the expression "the times of the Gentiles"—*kairoi ethnon*—does not occur in the Israel section of Romans, yet it has such a close relation to the phrase, "the fulness of the Gentiles," that its treatment logically belongs here.

In discoursing concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, our Lord uttered a prophecy which has been the subject of much discussion. He said: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21: 24).

Premillennialists assume that this can have no other meaning than to foretell the restoration of the Jewish race to Jerusalem. Thus their interpretation of this passage forms a strategic angle of premillenarian propaganda.

Jesus gives us a significant note as to the beginning of the times of the Gentiles: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled"

(Luke 21: 24). Herein he plainly intimates that the times of the Gentiles began historically with the destruction of Jerusalem—that is, at the same moment when the fulness of the Gentiles came to its complete privilege, or *kairos*.

Ideally and spiritually the times of the Gentiles began with the close of the Jewish dispensation at the death of Christ on Calvary when he “made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us [Jews and Gentiles], . . . that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby . . . . For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Eph. 2:14, 16, 18). “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, . . . that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:13, 14).

The “times” or dispensation of the Gentiles began in spiritual reality when Christ’s death marked the end of the Jewish dispensation and the coming of the blessing of Abraham on the Gentiles. But this was not historically manifest while the Jewish temple and sacrifice continued. Gentiles were quietly coming in, but always they faced strong opposition in so doing, both from Judaism proper and from the Judaizing element within Christianity itself. Therefore

“the fulness of the Gentiles”—their full liberty in the church—was not beyond human question until the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Jewish temple and state. Then that which had been a spiritual reality for nearly forty years became a fact in history patent to all the world.

Premillennialists ought to be friendly to the view of Dean Alford, since he was one of their number. On this point he says: “The times of the Gentiles are the end of the Gentile dispensation—just as the *time* of Jerusalem was the end, fulfilment of the Jewish dispensation; and the great rejection of the Lord by the Gentile world, answering to its type, his rejection by the Jews being finished, the time shall come of which the destruction of Jerusalem was a type. *Times* has the same meaning as time: no essential difference is to be insisted on. It is plural because the Gentiles (nations) are plural: each Gentile people having in turn its *time*.”

The times of the Gentiles then is the same as the dispensation of the Gentiles, or the Christian dispensation, and will end at the end of the world, at the same time as the Christian dispensation ends.

The destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the end of the world. Christ prophesied the destruction of the temple (Matt. 24:2); and the disciples asked about that event, the coming of Christ, and the end of the world. Our Lord combined the description of all these events in answering the composite question of his disciples. The reason for this was because the destruction of Jerusalem was a fit type of the end of the world.

The analogy would seem to indicate that just as the Jews rejected Christ and brought on the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the outward Jewish dispensation historically—it ended spiritually at the cross—so the nations of the last days will reject Christ, that is, all but a remnant will do so, and bring on the destruction of the world and the end of the Gentile dispensation or times of the Gentiles, thus closing the last era in the history of this world.

A study of the word leads us to a similar conclusion. *Kairoi*, “times,” is elsewhere in the New Testament sometimes translated seasons (e.g., Matt. 21:41 and thirteen other times, singular and plural). It is less frequently translated “opportunity.” So we might translate the word the “seasons” or the “opportunities” of the Gentiles.

The word "Gentiles," *ethne*, in Luke 21:24 means "nations." It is so translated by some scholars. The same word is elsewhere translated "nations" sixty-two times in the New Testament. In Matt. 25:32 we read, "And before him shall be gathered all nations [*panta ta ethne*]" for judgment.

The times of the Gentiles, then, are the seasons of the nations, the day of their opportunity, which will only close when the Christ returns to earth riding the white horse and carrying his glorious sword wherewith to smite the nations—*ta ethne*—(Rev. 19:15) at the end of the world.

Closely connected with the fulness of the Gentiles is the prediction of Paul concerning the salvation of all Israel, "And so all Israel shall be saved." This "all Israel" must be spiritual Israel, else what of the unnumbered millions of earthly Israel who have died in unbelief during the last two thousand years? They would certainly be included in "all Israel" if that means earthly Israel. And thus they would have been saved in hostility to Christ, or the promise would not have been kept in the earthly, literal sense. Paul's purpose is to show that it has been kept, but not as the Jews expected. Paul makes the salvation of Jews hinge

entirely on their faith, the same as of other men. "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in" (Rom. 11:23). Notice the "if"—it is the same "if" that conditions the salvation of any man. Paul asserts their salvability lest some should think they could not be saved.

We find it impossible to concur in the opinion of that class of writers represented by Dean Alford, who says: "Thus the covenant of God with Israel, having been national, shall ultimately be fulfilled to them as a nation." To say this is to cancel all that Paul has written of spiritual Israel, the obliteration of all national and race distinctions in the eternal kingdom of Christ.

Even if the literal seed inherited the promises, however, in direct contradiction to the teaching of Paul that the spiritual seed inherit it, the inheritance would still be an event contingent upon the discontinuance of unbelief by the Jews; and thus their admission would stand on exactly the same ground as the Gentiles.

"At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them"



(Jer. 18:9, 10). This teaches plainly that even the nationalistic promise hinged entirely on the behavior of the objects thereof, and indicates that the conversion of the Jews is conditional just the same as that of other nationalities.

The promise of restoration affected not only Israel, but other ancient nations as well: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. 19:24, 25). Thus is taught the opening of the gospel to Israel and the nations alike. In Jer. 12:14-17 is prophesied the restoration of all the nations bordering on ancient Israel on the same basis. There is exactly the same reason to expect the restoration of these nations as those of Israel.

## CHAPTER XVI

### ZIONISM AND THE TRUE RESTORATION

Many people think that the present development of Zionism in seeking to repopulate Palestine with Jews is the beginning of the restoration of Israel of which the prophets spoke.

That the Jews should seek to regain Palestine is not at all marvelous. While improbable, it is not impossible that they should build there a Jewish nation. That they should be a nation favored of God above other peoples for whom the blood of Jesus was spilled and that they should have God's blessing in building again the ancient temple and reviving the worship displaced by Christ's sacrifice, is a thing incredible to a careful student of the New Testament.

Nationalism is a deep-seated race instinct. Students will remember how the Irish have struggled against the British government for ages. President Wilson's doctrine of self-determination of peoples gave opportunity for the renaissance of a number of petty nationalities in various parts of the world, some of which had

been dormant for so long that many educated people supposed they were obliterated quite as completely as the ancient Gothic states.

Deep philosophy is found in the remark of the Wise Man: "That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been" (Eccl. 3:14). In spite of all the shoutings of our so-called progressives and radicals, nothing determines the future course of history like the long-buried roots of the past. Really it would not be surprising to see a revival of the ancient Saxon states of England—long since relics of history.

Following the capture of Palestine from the Turks the British government undertook to make it a homeland for the Jewish race somewhat after the plan of Dr. Hertzl, the founder of Zionism. Thus to a revived Ireland, Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Arabia, and what not, was added a revived Judah, or such was the view of Zionists and premillennialists.

However, this experiment has not met with easy success. The Arabs in Palestine oppose it overwhelmingly, and the English taxpayer betrays no great enthusiasm over a scheme whose advantages are so dubious. The final outcome of the plan is therefore a matter that cannot

be known as yet. European and Asiatic politics offer such a swiftly changing and unstable arrangement of affairs that it seems futile to try to predict how long any one status will obtain or one policy will hold good. These shifting sands of diplomatic policy are poor foundation for a Bible doctrine.

But even if this plan succeeds it will not amount to a restoration of Israel according to Bible prophecy, so far as any one can judge by present signs. The author has been in Palestine since the movement began and he speaks from personal observation. Only a small fraction of the fifteen and a half million Jews of the world are returning to Palestine—scarcely a thousandth part. The land could not contain the rest of them, even if they should wish to return. America is the “Promised Land” to vastly greater numbers of Jews than have any interest in Palestine.

Of course this is nothing if God is planning by miracle to restore the Jews to Palestine. But the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, if it were according to God’s plan now, would be conditional upon repentance. The Jews are not repenting; least of all the Zionist Jews who are seeking salvation by residing in Palestine. Doubtless it will be found that Zionism will

prove a real hindrance to the conversion of its adherents. More than likely Dr. Hertzl, the founder of Zionism, will prove to be only another one of the many false prophets who have for ages led Jews astray. His son has found the way his distinguished father missed; for he has been converted to Christ.

Granting the possible success of political Zionism—and that is doubtful—this would fall far short of proof that God is miraculously restoring the Jews to Palestine while they abide in unbelief and rebellion against Christ.

The Jews who came back from Babylon brought with them priests and rulers sufficient to take over the political administration of the country and to revive the temple service. This, of course, the present Jewish immigrants cannot do, and their presence in the land means nothing so far as national restoration is concerned.

Having in a previous chapter discussed the literal fulfilment of the prophecies concerning earthly Israel, we may now give some attention to their spiritual application to the Israel of God in the New Testament dispensation.

“For thus saith the Lord God; Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day

that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel'' (Ezek. 34:11-13).

The foregoing inspired utterance, typical as it is of all the prophecies of Israel's restoration, is doubtless fulfilled in one respect in every normal congregation of the Christian church. There the chief shepherd and his under-shepherd seek out the beloved flock and pasture them in the unity of Christian love in one fold.

But this prophecy and others like it will not meet complete fulfilment until this work of the Good Shepherd of Israel is accomplished on a world-wide scale. To say that a better age is before the Christian church should not be construed as a disparagement of the hosts of godly people whose work has adorned the cause of Christ throughout all the time since the days of Luther. The accomplishments of evangelical Christianity during the age of Protestantism have been so splendid that earnest students of history easily become indignant at trifling or malicious criticism thereof. The writer is one



of these who has resented this hostile criticism and has employed tongue and pen in defense of present-day Christianity against unjustified attacks. But it is by no means an unfriendly act to weigh dispassionately and evaluate fairly the various comparative virtues and defects of each era of church history.

We know that the rise of monasticism and of the papacy were defects in the church of the Middle Ages. Yet we would not therefore cast any aspersion on the sincerity and piety of a St. Francis or a Thomas á Kempis—yes, and of myriads of others, less known to men, equally or better esteemed of God. Just so, future students of this Protestant era—the most brilliant period of the church since the Apostolic Age—will note without passion as a historical fact that its greatest defect is denominationalism—the division of the body of Christ into hundreds of factions.

In so doing they will not depreciate the work of the saints and heroes whose names adorn the pages of the history of Protestantism. They could not transcend their time, nor could they anticipate the church's necessary historical development. All honor to the godly men and women who in this era have made Christ's name glorious to the ends of the earth.

However, we cannot stand still. Behind us is the word of ancient prophecy: "Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them *one nation* in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them *all*: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all" (Ezek. 37:15-22).

This golden vision of the prophet envisages a time when the spiritual Israel shall be known as one nation. For ages Protestant theologians have stressed the essential unity of the church—the spiritual unity. In this stage of the historical development of the church visible unity was regarded as impossible of attainment. But instead of admitting and regretting this fact as a serious defect in Protestant Christianity and praying and striving for an ideal, however remote it might seem, many Protestant apologists condoned and even defended the divisions of Protestantism.

Little progress could be expected by satisfied men who contentedly regarded divided Protestant Christianity as the perfection of the church's historic development—the goal of her

age-long race. Our Lord Jesus had set a higher standard. He focused all the scattered rays of ancient prophecy in one burning point of light—one definite picture of perfection. In one brief passage he had set forever in deathless words the uttermost goal of the church's history—an objective towards which she is ever borne by Omnipotence as surely as the night turns toward the day. He prayed for all believers, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us" (John 17:21).

We exhort young people to create a high ideal and strive to reach it. I submit that as teachers of morality and religion it is the duty of the ministry to present this ideal before the flock of Christ everywhere, rather than to formulate excuses. We are told that this unity is only a spiritual unity that we already have. The church has always had spiritual unity. To pray for the spiritual unity of the church is like praying for water to be wet. It cannot exist without that quality.

Moreover, Christ added a note that puts his meaning beyond debate—"that the world may believe." Of the spiritual unity of the church the world knows less than it does of the invisible radio waves going through a room without a

receiving set to catch them. These waves are actual realities, but in the absence of an instrument to receive and make them audible they mean nothing to any one. The spiritual unity of the church is a real thing, but it means nothing to the world till it is caught and manifested to men through the instrumentality of a united church functioning in the every-day world. The kind of unity that makes the world believe will of necessity be an outward, visible unity which the world can see.

This was a worthy object of the prayer of Jesus. It was once accomplished in the Apostolic Age, and our faith in Christ visions it as a real possibility again. The high-priestly prayer of Jesus, like his atoning passion, has never-ending validity for his church, and the high and holy ideal which it sets up ought to charm and magnetize the heart of the church till its final fulfilment.

One grave stumbling-block in the road to unity is the fact that the doctrine of visible unity has been preached by several sects whose chief characteristic was a bitter censoriousness and a narrow exclusiveness that served to bring disrepute on the doctrine. It reminds one of the many cures for tuberculosis. These finally became such a scandal that about the worst thing

you could say of a remedy was to assert that it would cure tuberculosis. But our abhorrence of the quacks and nostrums never did extend so far that we defended tuberculosis as a good thing. While we do not believe that any nostrum will cure tuberculosis we do think it is curable and we make an effort to cure it and hold before ourselves the ideal of a world in which tuberculosis shall be no more.

Would it not be more reasonable also, while condemning the worthless nostrums that have been prescribed for the cure of division in the Christian church, to admit that division is a serious evil and to seek to cure it by all the means at hand, and further, to hold before ourselves the ideal of a divisionless Christian world such as Christ prayed for?

The spirit of the age in which we live is not one to sit idly by and calmly admit that an evil is inevitable without the most eager and indefatigable research to find a way out. Yellow fever and malaria are not tolerated merely because they have scourged mankind since the dawn of history, but they are successfully eliminated. In course of time we shall doubtless overcome most if not all of mankind's ancient and giant plagues. So, also, consonant with the voice of prophecy and in fulfilment of

the prayer of Jesus Christ, evangelical Christianity will seek for and obtain the unity which shall be visible to all men.

It is not only the quacks who have diagnosed the ailment of Protestantism, but her most trusted teachers and guides. Dr. James Hamilton, famous Presbyterian divine of the early nineteenth century, wrote as follows: "Heaven is the abode of unity, and when the spirit of unity comes into a soul or into a church it cometh from above. The Comforter brings it down. Discord is of the earth or from beneath. The divisions of Christians show that there is still much carnality amongst them. The more carnal a Christian is the more sectarian will he be, and the more spiritual he is the more loving and forbearing and self-renouncing are you sure to find him."

Henry Ward Beecher, one of the most noted preachers of his day, said: "The day is to come when, out of each soul, blossoming, shall rise a sweet fragrance that shall mingle with the fragrance of other souls, and when there shall be an ineffable union—a union that is moral and spiritual—between Christians of every name." While Beecher did not believe in a visible, organic unity, he nevertheless went farther in that direction than many were able to follow.



The Protestant leaders of today have gone far beyond even Beecher's standpoint and plead boldly for the elimination of denominational rivalry, duplication, and waste. The following editorial appeared in the *Christian Century*, one of the foremost religious papers of the day:

"As a matter of fact the more the native Christians know of our Western Christianity, the more they are assured of the fact that it does not meet the needs of their people as does the Christianity of which they read in the New Testament. . . .

"How long is this sort of thing to be continued? We all realize what a handicap it is to the work. We admit everything that these various writers have said. How long are we going to continue to bring men to John Wesley, to John Calvin, to Roger Williams, and others, instead of bringing them directly to Jesus Christ? How long will we refuse to hear Christ saying to us: 'Oh, faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring them unto me.'?"

I should hesitate to quote these words for fear my motive might be misunderstood and I might be accused of criticizing evangelical Christianity, but I trust no such error will be made when it is known that the quotation besides be-

ing penned by a noted editor and published in a great religious paper was also read approvingly on the floor of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America for the year 1923 by Dr. James Speer, a distinguished Presbyterian layman, who is also a member of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A. He was giving an account of his missionary trip around the world and registering his disapproval and disappointment at the evidences of denominational division in mission fields. He said further: "The loss to the whole missionary cause due to the way in which we are split up denominationally is deplorable. It was a great surprize to me, and a great disappointment, to see how much denominationalism is in evidence on the missionary field, etc."

Other delegates expressed the same conviction. Rev. B. F. Shively, United Brethren missionary to Japan, said: "Our great curse in Japan is denominationalism, etc." Over and over the same thought was expressed in this great meeting of the leaders of American Protestantism, and not one word was said in rebuttal of their position. No reply was attempted; for the truth of it was universally acknowledged. Doubtless these leaders know well whereof they speak.

In December, 1924, Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, of Brooklyn, N. Y., President of the Federal Council of Churches, in a sermon before that body, predicted that the light of an undivided church should shine upon the world. He said: "Too many retract from our Lord's ideal for the church, not because they look upon it as incredible, but as impossible. Nevertheless its fulfilment is inevitable. If he wills her oneness none can withstand his will. Nor has she a valid title to anything he has not designed her to be. The holiness of her membership is no more vital than its unity in the Spirit and in the organic forms which the Spirit shall ordain. When all believers are thus one as the Son is one with the Father, the world will know that he came forth as the Father. Then will the crying needs of the race be met and its religious hunger appeased."

Thus do our foremost leaders and thinkers in the Protestant world humbly and trustingly put their faith in the miracle-working efficacy of the prayer of Jesus to restore her lost visible unity to the church, the bride of Christ.

This is the church's jubilee—the long-expected restoration of Israel.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE KINGDOM

Premillennialists put great stress on the wording of common phrases. Not one person in a hundred would distinguish between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven. God is in heaven and rules heaven. What difference can there be between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven? In the days of Nero what difference was there between the empire of Nero and the empire of Rome?

That there is such a difference, however, is the position of premillennialists. Dr. Gray says: "There are two phrases descriptive of it in the New Testament, 'the Kingdom of God' and the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' which in the popular mind are identical and interchangeable, but this is an error" (A Text-Book on Prophecy, p. 55).

If this is an error, it is one into which the writers of the New Testament have fallen, for they use the terms interchangeably. "The kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). It is a splitting of hairs to make a difference here. Evidently the same thing is meant each time.

God is universal ruler, ruling in many domin-

ions. Each division of his power may be said to be his kingdom. God rules over the physical universe—that is the kingdom of God. He rules over the physical earth—that is the kingdom of God. His rule over all created intelligence is the kingdom of God. He is king of saints—all the mighty host of the redeemed, living and dead, and that company are the kingdom of God. And heaven, that bright world of glory, the eternal home of the saints, is the kingdom of God. The ceaseless work of the Spirit of God and the principles of eternal righteousness, leading men of all lands and races toward the goal of holiness, is the functioning of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God in physical nature is a realm where God's law knows no struggle to secure enforcement, and in which his will is always done in minutest detail. It does not occupy much of the Biblical writers' time. God's rule over the holy angels is so perfect there is no contingency ever involved. The Bible has not much to tell us there. God's rule over men's hearts is maintained by moral suasion and not by force. Therefore around this dramatic possibility there gather the greatest problems of history and literature and the chief interest of the Bible as well.

Therefore, while there is a sense in which the kingdom of God is much larger than the church, as a matter of fact the kingdom of God and the church of God are practically synonymous, referring as they generally do to the host of blood-washed souls who give obedience to the King of saints and the Spirit that moves in them. Sometimes the term "kingdom of God" refers to the spirit and principles that animate the redeemed society. In that case the church is the organism and the kingdom is its life principle. But these are only different aspects under which the work of God is seen.

"Does the devil rule the world?" This seems to be an absurd question for a Christian to ask. Nevertheless it is a question to which premillennialism gives an affirmative answer. Dr. Gray tells us: "At the creation of man God gave into his hands the dominion over all the earth, which man lost to Satan at the fall, the latter then becoming the 'prince of this world'" (A Text-Book on Prophecy, p. 55).

Anyone unfamiliar with the Scriptures might suppose that the foregoing statement was plainly set down therein. But when you turn to the account of the fall of Adam you read nothing whatever concerning Satan's being exalted thereby. On the contrary the serpent received



a most bitter and humiliating curse at that time.

However, Satan is called "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) and the "god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4). From this some have deduced that he is at present ruling this world and will continue to do so till Jesus comes and overthrows his kingdom. Those who so believe teach that storms and destructive acts of nature are not "acts of God," as legal language puts it, but acts of the devil, for he is the "prince of this world"—*archon tou kosmou* (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

We modestly think the following to be a better explanation: Satan is indeed a prince of the kingdom of darkness. He reigns over that foul company of angels which sinned and were cast down to hell and delivered "into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment" (II Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). These chains doubtless allow liberty to explore the air. Jesus in prophetic vision saw Satan fall as lightning from the aerial heavens (Luke 10:18) smitten by the victory of Christ over his kingdom.

This access to the aerial heavens is yet bondage to these proud and rebellious spirits, for once, as unfallen angels, they probably had access to the entire universe of God and could stand in glorious majesty on the most distant

suns and fly through the midst of the starry heavens. Now they are bound by the chains of guilt into perdition and by the chains of God's sentence not to pass beyond the earth's atmosphere into the outer universe.

On the earth, within the range of Satan's prison walls, are multitudes of the human race seduced by him into all manner of sin. These are also subjects of his kingdom and citizens of his world, for Satan's kingdom is spiritual. He reigns in that world to which Christ and his people do not belong (John 17:6) and to which they are crucified (Gal. 6:14) and which "lieth in wickedness [the wicked one]" (I John 5:19), but which world, thank God, he that is born of God can overcome (I John 5:4).

This latter text would indicate that Satan's power in the air is spiritual, because Christians are no more able to overcome cyclones and wind-storms than anyone else, but they are complete overcomers over the kingdom of darkness from which they have been translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

We do not believe that Satan is king of this physical world, for we read: "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps: fire, and hail; snow, and vapors; stormy wind fulfilling his word" (Ps. 148:7, 8). And again, "He

giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels: who can stand before his cold? . . . he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow" (Ps. 147:16-18). "When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures" (Jer. 51:16). "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (I Cor. 10:26).

Here we learn that even the wicked people are not fully delivered to Satan in this world. If they were, how terrible would be their lot.

There is a sense in which all men are children of God by creation. That is why the prodigal son could pray to his father. Of course only the saved are children of God by adoption. The unsaved, being rebels against God, belong to the moral and spiritual kingdom of Satan. But the scriptures quoted deny that Satan has entire charge of the lives and fortunes of even the worst of men. While the day of mercy lasts they are subjects of the kindly providence of God. Much less do these scriptures allow that

Satan rules the physical world. They teach the contrary doctrine that physical nature is completely under the dominion of God in every detail, "for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him" (Luke 8:25).

The term "kingdom" appears one hundred and twelve times in the four Gospels alone. Therefore, it must be an important theme in the mind of the Holy Spirit. That one fact alone would create a natural expectation that it was something for the present, as we do not suppose the Lord and his apostles devoted all their time to preaching about a good time to come which was then fully two thousand years distant.

The Gentile saints in Colossæ most certainly obtained entrance into the kingdom of God. Everybody who believes the Word of God must accept this, for we read: "Giving thanks unto the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:12, 13). Here "hath translated," *metestesen*, "he has removed," is in the aorist, which indicates completed action. If Paul is to be relied upon, these Colossian heathen converts ages ago had been brought into the kingdom of Christ. It was therefore a present reality upon the earth at that time. The writer of the Hebrews says:

“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which can not be moved, let us have grace, etc.” (Heb. 12:28). This immovable kingdom is the same kingdom of Christ into which the Colossian converts were translated.

The apostle John was already in the kingdom of Jesus, and he had companions in that goodly society during his lifetime. He writes: “I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ” (Rev. 1:9). This makes quite a number who were in the kingdom of God in this dispensation.

Jesus threatened the Jews of his age, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof” (Matt. 21:43). Some critic in the future will doubtless be able to show how the kingdom could be taken away from people who never had it, but many will believe Christ’s words and conclude that the kingdom is in this world and not all in the future.

Jesus said that the publicans and harlots were going into the kingdom of God in his day (Matt. 21:31). The kingdom of God must have been present then. Again the Master said it was “easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the

kingdom of God'' (Matt. 19: 24). Now, if there was at that time no kingdom of God to enter, it was just as hard for anyone else to obtain entrance as for a rich man, for it was impossible to anybody.

Again, if the kingdom of God is an earthly, temporal kingdom imposed upon the world by power and collecting all kinds of taxes, it would not be hard for a rich man to get into it, but *impossible* for him with his vast taxable estates *to escape it*. A rich man might sell his property and move out of the United States to escape its taxation, but if the kingdom of God should be a world-wide, carnal empire the rich man who might not like its laws would have nowhere else to go. Instead of finding it hard to enter he would find it impossible to get out of it. So the theory that the kingdom is not present makes nonsense out of these words of Christ.

However, we have a very reasonable explanation why it is hard for rich men to enter. Jesus himself says, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God'' (John 3: 5). Herein Jesus pledges his own sincerity that the man who is born of water and the Spirit, which signifies conversion, entered into the kingdom of God at that time just



as did the penitent harlots and publicans previously mentioned.

“The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth [present tense] into it” (Luke 16:16). According to the word of Jesus, people were pressing into the kingdom of God in his time. If premillennialists had written that we should have expected them to say, “The kingdom of God is preached and every man is preparing to press into it in future ages.”

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,” said Jesus, “for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 5:3). Here Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven was a present reality possessed by the poor in spirit. “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force” (Matt. 11:12). If the kingdom of heaven were not to come for thousands of years, how could the earnest, determined souls of Christ’s time take it by force? The advice, to “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33) would be mockery if the kingdom were to be in another age. Whoever believes Jesus’ words here can not believe that his kingdom was not then a present reality.

There were people entering the kingdom of

heaven in Jesus' time, if we believe his word. He says: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in" (Matt. 23: 13). How could the scribes and Pharisees of Christ's time shut up the kingdom of heaven if it was not to come to earth for thousands of years? And how could the people enter the kingdom of heaven in Christ's time if the theory be true that it has not even yet come?

The disciples became concerned about who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus set a child in their midst and told them that conversion was necessary to enter the kingdom. "Who-soever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18: 4).

In the great vision of Daniel, second chapter, all ancient history from that time forward is given under the symbol of a human figure. First the head of gold represented Babylonia; the breast and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the belly and thighs of brass, Greece; and the legs of iron and feet part of iron and part of clay, the Roman Empire. It will be borne in mind that we are viewing the Book of Daniel from the "Fundamentalist" standpoint, without entering

into any of the controversies concerning the Book raised by negative criticism.

“Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth” (Dan. 2: 34, 35). Please read the whole passage, going down to verse 44, where the interpretation is given: “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed . . . it shall stand forever.”

Perhaps one is afraid of prophetic mysteries. No fear here need cause us to stumble, for we have the plainest, matter-of-fact language: “Thou art this head of gold.” All the other kingdoms follow from this in historical order. “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom.” No mystery, no puzzle there. Count down along the great world-empires from Babylonia and you come to Rome, which was destroyed by its struggle with Christianity.

No kingdom exists today having any logical or historical connection with ancient Babylonia. In the days of Rome, Christianity was established and its revolutionary doctrines destroyed the last great empire of history. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Christianity was that kingdom.

Following are given three direct scriptures which make it necessary to acknowledge that the kingdom was set up two thousand years ago, or to deny the plain teaching of Christ.

Jesus said: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:27). This was not the kingdom of glory in heaven, for people die before entering that; and these were to see the kingdom before tasting death. It was the kingdom of God manifested in visible glory on the day of Pentecost that Jesus meant. Those who put the kingdom of God far into the future must deny this scripture or assert that some of the people then present are yet alive on earth after two thousand years.

We do not believe there are slips of the tongue in the Word, but if such were possible this is not one, for we read again: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some

of them that stand here, which shall not *taste of death*, till they have *seen* the kingdom of God come with power'' (Mark 9: 1).

Again we read: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom'' (Matt. 16: 28).

Thus do the Scriptures plainly teach that the kingdom of God was set up on this earth and seen by living men ages ago.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### DISPENSATIONAL TRUTH

“That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ” (Eph. 1:10). *Dispensatio*, “management,” was the word used by the translators of the Vulgate or Latin Bible to translate the Greek word *oikonomia*, stewardship, economy. This word *oikonomia* was accordingly translated “dispensation” by the English translators also. It means the plan of a steward for administering the affairs of a family; hence, in theology, a religious system.

In premillennial literature this word means the particular age during which mankind lives under a certain plan or economy of divine stewardship; or briefly, an age. Of these they enumerate seven or eight. Dr. Gray, quoting from the Scofield Reference Bible, gives us the following seven: Innocency, Conscience, Human Government, Promise (Israelitish), Law, Grace, Kingdom, or Millennial Age (a thousand years). And he adds: “Some find an eighth dispensation revealed, that of the ‘Fulness of the Times’ (Eph. 1:10), and identified by them with the age



when Christ shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father.”

Readers of the original are aware of the frequent use of the word *aion* or “age” in the Greek New Testament. I believe the majority who through reason of familiarity with the language have been able to observe this large use of the word concede that the way it is translated in the English versions faithfully represents the sense of the original. Few are impressed with the idea that these ages give any hint of fundamental changes in the manner of the divine administration of this world.

It is convenient to distinguish between the Old Testament and the New. Any reader of the New Testament, and especially of the Book of Hebrews, must be impressed with the fact that there is a fundamental essential difference in the eras which met at the death of Jesus. Since the era that closed at the crucifixion was covered by the history, law, or prophecy of the Old Testament, it is convenient to call it all the Old Testament dispensation. There is, therefore, a break between the Old and New Testaments, but with the exception of the change from the era of innocence in the Garden of Eden, we shall doubtless be unable to find anywhere in the Old Testament such a change of the divine administration

as that which marks the Old Testament off from the New.

It is perfectly proper for the Bible student to divide up Old Testament history into as many eras as he may find convenient to assist in the mastery of his study. But there is a real danger in overlooking the unity of the Old Testament, and this one is likely to do if he impresses upon the Bible a large number of fanciful dispensations arbitrarily imposed from the outside, and thinks they are of as much importance as the text itself. It is the same kind of error, only more serious, which ignorant persons make in assuming dates of Archbishop Usher printed in the margins of their Bibles to be a part of the Bible itself.

As to the New Testament, we are living in the last age of this old world, an age which shall close to usher in the ages of eternity. In perfect fairness, I shall let a premillennialist speak about the dispensation of the fulness of times which most premillennialists put into the distant future far beyond the millennium itself. Dean Alford, a giant in scholarship and ability writes, commenting on Eph. 1:10:

“The mistake which has misled almost all the commentators here, and which as far as I know Stier has been the only one to expose, has been

that of taking *the fulness of the times* as a fixed date in the fact, and making it mean the coming of Christ, as Gal. 4:4, whereas usage, and the sense, determine it to mean the whole duration of the Gospel times . . . Thus *the dispensation of the fulness of the times* will mean, the filling up, completing, fulfilment of the appointed seasons, carrying on during the Gospel dispensation. Now, belonging to, carried on during, this fulfilling of the periods or seasons is the *economy* or dispensation here spoken of."

Thus does one of the greatest and soberest of their own writers put the dispensation of the fulness of times into the present Gospel Age. And in this, in spite of verbal differences, we agree. But a greater than Dean Alford has warned us that we live in the last age of this time world. The ages to come are the endless ages of eternity.

The Apostle, speaking of this age, says: "This know also, that in the *last days* [*eschatais emerais*] perilous times shall come" (II Tim. 3:1). Peter quoted Joel on the Day of Pentecost: "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, etc." Peter called this New Testament dispensation the last days [*eschatais emerais*]" (Acts 2:16, 17). The writer of the

Hebrews calls this Christian dispensation "the last days." Peter calls the present age the last times—*eschaton ton chronon* (I Pet. 1: 20). The Beloved Apostle warns us: "little children, it is the last time [*eschate hora*, last hour]" (I John 2: 18).

It will be observed that we have here the "last days," the "last times," and even the "last hour"—all referring to this present gospel dispensation. But what about the ages, or *aions*; Paul informed the Corinthian brethren that the ends of the world had come upon them, but the Greek is *tele ton aionon*—"ends of the ages" (I Cor. 10: 11). However many dispensations or *aions* (they are not the same) there may have been before Paul's time, he and his hearers lived in the last of them so far as earthly hours, days, or times were concerned.

We know that we are in the last of the ages of earthly time by the direct word of Holy Scripture. The Greek Bible speaks of the ages of eternity somewhat as we do in English. The expression "for ages" is a common one. The word for eternity is derived therefrom. But in speaking of earthly ages the Word says that Christ came in the "end of the ages." There cannot be any more ages after the one in which Christ came: "Now once in the end of the world hath

he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26). "In the end of the world" is *epi sunteleia ton aionon*—"in the end of the ages." We shall let our premillennial brethren argue whether this is true or not—whether Christ's crucifixion really is in the end of the ages of earthly time; but personally we shall accept it, for with John, "We know that it is the last time" (I John 2:18).

Dr. Gray says: "'Age' is commonly used as synonymous with dispensation." This is assumption pure and simple. Age, *aion*, and dispensation, *oikonomia*, are not synonymous. Any man able to spell out the Greek letters and read the definitions in a standard lexicon may convince himself with ease that "dispensation" and "age" are not synonymous in the Greek Testament.

Premillennialist writers seek to substantiate the theory of many dispensations with the liberal use of the term *aions* or "ages" in the Greek Testament. But in Greek as in English "age" is a very general, indefinite term. Its primary signification was a human lifetime, and it may signify merely an era or season. And these eras may coexist, just as in English we may say that the age of stone and the age of iron overlapped. In fact, in the world today all the

various ages of human culture from the age of stone to the age of flying and the age of radio are coexisting. But the dispensations do not overlap. They lie end to end throughout history.

Perhaps it was the fact of many ages running along side by side at the same time that was in the mind of the Apostle in using the plural in I Cor. 10:11. Every nation and people and institution has its *aion*, its age, its *kairos*, as was explained concerning the "times of the Gentiles." Thus the one Christian dispensation in which Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself is the end of all the different seasons, times, or ages of all the various peoples and nations of the earth. The Christian dispensation is the end of all the ages of time, as Paul declared.

Altho the theory of "dispensational truth" may be shown to have such flimsy foundations as to be nothing more than assumption and invention of the fertile minds of our good brethren, broadminded people will ask what harm can come of it anyhow. Without setting out to judge motives, two unfortunate results may be noted. First, premillennialists, having invented these dispensations with their own heads, sometimes suddenly spring them on Christians who have never heard of them. In-



ability to handle this shibboleth produces an inferiority complex in their brethren, and a willingness to receive the rest of the premillennial formulas from persons who are supposed to have such deep knowledge of the Bible.

Some people enjoy writing by a secret code, talking argot, or otherwise displaying exclusive knowledge. This is not commonly taken as a mark of erudition. A man is not a scholar because he can read the price symbols in a store, and a Greek or Hebrew scholar may be unable to read the secret code which his children use for correspondence. Doubtless it is not an unpardonable fault if a brother seeks to humble us by a display of superior esoteric knowledge concerning "dispensational truth," but the possible injury lies in the danger lest one become involved in a tangled web of "ages" and "dispensations" and thus fail to know clearly with John that this age is the last time. No other earthly age is to follow.

Dr. Gray adopts a suggestion from Chapell concerning the dispensations of premillennialist theology, which requires attention. He writes: "It may be the opposing forces of Satan and his hosts in the heavenly places that causes them; for he [Chapell] regards them as so many stages in the divine warfare, so many epochs in

the execution of the plan of redemption. There are concealments of God's purpose in the ages which may be necessary in order to obtain victory."

Is not his an attempt to be wise above what is written? Has not the revered Bible teacher here allowed himself to drift into speculation far beyond the solid knowledge of the plain teaching of Scripture? What thoughtful Bible student can calmly contemplate God as using shrewd caution and strategic maneuvers with the devil over various ages of time, like a long-drawn-out game of checkers—always warily watching lest a slip might overturn the throne of God and darken the universe with the colossal failure of eternal Wisdom and Holiness.

We think differently of a mighty God before whom hell trembles and Satan cowers in full knowledge of eternal and absolute defeat.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE ANTICHRIST

The premillenarian doctrine of Antichrist is outlined by Blackstone, somewhat as follows: The spirit of Antichrist is in the world now, but will eventually culminate in one person, "*the Antichrist*"—"As Christ is the express image of God, so it appears that antichrist is the culminating manifestation of Satan, 'the prince of this world.' " The passage concerning the superhuman nature of this man is quoted exactly so as not to misrepresent the author's position.

Dr. Gray also tells us something about this incarnate fiend, apparently half man and half devil: "But these two [the beast and the Antichrist], while also men, were nevertheless superhuman men. They came up out of the abyss and cannot now be slain as mortals (Bullinger); hence they are cast alive into the 'lake of fire.' And there they are still found alive at the close of the millennium."

Returning to Blackstone, we find that the "mystery of Lawlessness" was already at work during the apostle Paul's time, but was restrained by the Holy Spirit. When the Holy

Spirit is taken out of the midst of this world at the rapture of the church then will come the revelation of the lawless one. He will be received by the Jews, they having returned to Palestine. In their temple at Jerusalem he will sit as an object of worship until at the completion of the seven years of the tribulation period a third part of the Jews having refused to worship him will be gathered together by the Lord into Jerusalem to be purged of their dross. Jerusalem will be besieged by the nations and fall amidst unparalleled sufferings. But the war will be cut short by the personal appearing of Christ, who will destroy Antichrist by the brightness of his coming.

The very qualities of this kind of exegesis which make it impossible for some people to endure are the features which endear it most fully to others. It seems entirely too fanciful to some but that is the very thing which captures the imagination of others.

Doubtless the joy which some people get by making cross-word puzzles out of the solemn language of Holy Scripture and then offering solutions thereof is equalled exactly by the sorrow which others feel at seeing its divine symbolism, which is capable of being understood as a noble parable of the mighty forces of good and

evil whose colossal figures fill all history and portray the spiritual experiences of all people, narrowed down to a petty struggle which a few Jews are to have with a half-devil in Palestine in the far-distant future. If that is what it means, then in the manner of Blackstone, I say, beloved, it does not mean anything to us today.

Now, what about this incarnate devil theory? When I was a boy they told me about a woman who reviled a Bible agent. The agent rebuked her firmly for her wickedness. In the lapse of time a child was born to her, so I was told, half man and half devil. As a child I worried over that question all anybody ought to have to puzzle over such things in one whole life-time, and now as a man I am dealing with the same kind of a puzzle again. As a child my first impulse was to pity the poor child who never had a real chance to be a normal human being. Then I feared to offer any sympathy to the devil that he was at least in part. Thus I struck a terrible dilemma: It was wrong to hate the human that he was and wrong to love the devil that he was. I suppose I might have wrecked my mind on such an insoluble problem had I not thought of another way out—perhaps there was no such creature ever born. So disposing of this

as a fantasy of the imagination I diverted my mind to other subjects.

The child is father to the man. I hope my premillenarian brethren will not count it against me for prejudice that I regard their superhuman Antichrist just as I came to understand the "half-devil half-baby" legend of my boyhood. Was it not rather the providence of God which thus led me to think the problem through without any theological bias?

When Christ was on earth he was perfect God and perfect man; yet he could be wounded and did die as very man. I can believe that Deity was thus assimilated to perfect, model man. He was man for he suffered death. When God became incarnate he was not immune to physical injury and suffered death as the result of only a few wounds; but they tell us that when the devil becomes incarnate he will be so much superior to Christ that he will be invulnerable to wounds; and even submersion for a thousand years in a lake of fire cannot kill him. Would God allow evil to have so much more vitality than good?

Antichrist is to be manifested during the tribulation. Blackstone tells us plainly that he is permitted to appear because the Holy Spirit is withdrawn from the world. Now, if the Holy Spirit were withdrawn from the world, the



wonder would not be that human institutions should become corrupt, but that human government should exist at all; for the Bible says "the powers that be [government] are ordained of God." Yet premillennialists give us a picture of an era in which the Holy Ghost is withdrawn from the world, a picture which in some respects at least is better than that of Russia under the atheistic rule of the Bolsheviki. The Holy Ghost is not withdrawn from the world now. How can things be worse with him than without him?

With the Holy Ghost withdrawn from the world how can one-third of the Jews of Palestine resist the worship of the Antichrist and finally become martyrs of Jesus Christ? It is the common teaching of Christian theology that no one can effectually resist the devil and come to God without the agency of the Holy Spirit, and here we have multitudes of Jews resisting the most energetic manifestations of Satan in all history, enduring the most intense suffering for righteousness, and dying heroically as martyrs to God's cause all after the Holy Ghost has been withdrawn from the world, and therefore without any assistance from him whatever. Are we to believe that the Jews are so constituted that they can if they like ascend the starry heights of

martyrdom and conquer the brightest crown of religion entirely without that help?

The doctrine of the Antichrist is very ancient. It took its rise in the Jewish Church in Old Testament times. As held by the church of Jesus it is a true doctrine. No objection is made to the doctrine itself, but to that fantastic form of it which is one of the tenets of premillennialism.

“And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great . . . and it cast down some of the host and of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them . . . and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away” (Dan. 8:9-11).

Doubtless Daniel here referred directly to Antiochus Epiphanes. However, if this were all the light which Scripture gave on the subject, it would be impossible to go further. But Paul, taking Antiochus Epiphanes as a type, proceeds to prophesy explicitly of a man of sin who was yet to arise and fight against Christ and his people just as Antiochus Epiphanes formerly persecuted the godly Jews.

The Christians at Thessalonica had been greatly agitated over a scare about the end of the world such as occasionally arises today. Paul accordingly exhorts: “That ye be not soon

shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by sword, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come *a falling away* first [Greek, *he apostasia*, the apostasy], and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition: Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming'' (II Thess. 2:2-8).

That Paul was not discoursing on some fabulous half man and half devil who was to arise more than two thousand years later and contend with a comparatively few Jews who would be left on earth after Christ's people had been all taken up, is perfectly apparent. The apostasy and man of sin were to be a sign to the Chris-

tians before they should expect Christ. Now if Christ were to come and snatch them away before the appearance of the man of sin so that they would not even be on earth at his manifestation, how could the revelation of the man of sin be any sign to them of the approach of the coming of the Lord?

Paul tells Christians not to expect the day of Christ until after the manifestation of the man of sin. Premillennialists tell them not to worry about the man of sin, for before he ever is manifested Christ will have come and snatched them away out of this world. Here they contradict Paul.

Premillennialists say that at Paul's time the man of sin was in the far-distant future, at least two thousand years, and no man knows how much longer. Paul said that the mystery of iniquity was at work in his very lifetime. The awful apostasy that should unveil the man of sin was working then, but something was restraining it. What was that restraining force? "The Holy Ghost," answer at least some premillennialists. But the opinion of the ancient church was that the Roman Empire was the "he who now letteth," that is, the restraining power that prevented the full unveiling of the man of sin.

Tertullian, one of the ablest of the church fathers, wrote about A.D. 208: “ ‘For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now hinders must hinder, until he be taken out of the way.’ What obstacle is there but the Roman state, the falling away of which, by being scattered into ten kingdoms, shall introduce Antichrist upon (its own ruins)? ‘And then shall be revealed the wicked one, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming’ ” (On the Resurrection, chap. 24).

We are then in harmony with a very ancient opinion of the Christian church when we assign the Roman Empire as the cause which prevented the full unveiling of the Antichrist. Historically true it is that the full fruit of the apostasy which was beginning to be felt in Paul's time was not in fact unveiled until after the fall of Rome. In this the prophecy is linked intricately with historical fact.

That the papacy was one manifestation of the man of sin was held, according to Dr. Gloag, as early as A.D. 991. At the Council of Rheims, Arnulph, Bishop of Orleans, “declared that if the Roman pontiff was destitute of charity and puffed up with knowledge, he was Antichrist.” According to the same authority this view was

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held by Robert Grostete, Savonarola, the Albigenses, the Waldenses, Wyclif and the Wyclifites, the Hussites, St. Bernard, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melancthon, Beza, Bucer, Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and Jewell. It is an article in the creed of the Lutheran Church that the pope is Antichrist. The same doctrine is also a part of the Westminster Confession, the creed of Presbyterianism. The translators of the Authorized Version of the Bible in their dedication expressed their thanks to King James for writing against the man of sin, by which they meant the papacy.

This long array of great names extending over centuries and embracing the very flower of the great teachers and martyrs of the Protestant reformation era would mean very little to one unacquainted with the history of their times, but to the student, a view held in common by them all would appear at least worthy of respectful consideration.

This doctrine concerning the Antichrist, then, lies very near the heart of evangelical Christianity. Without the mighty zeal which it aroused it is doubtful if the Protestant reformation would have ever been more than a pious wish or an academic debate among the Roman Catholic clergy. It is hardly too much to say



that if it is false the Protestant movement itself is founded on falsehood—a conclusion much to be deplored. Yet, how can we hold otherwise, for if the pope is not Antichrist, if he holds only error in his doctrine, then are Protestants not in sinful rebellion? And are they not under obligation to return to his fold merely in the interest of Christian unity?

So far are we, however, from confining the Antichrist to the papacy that we assert most earnestly that John positively forbids us to do so. This he does inferentially by telling us that there are many antichrists. It is simply claimed that the papacy is that classic picture of Antichrist which Paul foresaw in prophetic vision, but that is only one form of the man of sin. The teaching of John must have full force. He says: “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even *now are there many antichrists*; whereby we know that it is the last time [the last hour]” (I John 2:18).

Instead of confining antichrist to some super-human man, half man and half devil, to appear in some far-distant age, John says there were many antichrists in his day, and that he was living in the last time or hour of earthly history. Moreover, he gives us an infallible test by which

we can try the spirits and discern Antichrist under whatever guise he may appear: "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and *this is that spirit of antichrist*, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:3). And again he says: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (II John 7). Plainly then, John forbids us to think that the antichrist is any one man. The spirit of antichrist is manifest in many ways.

Some time ago a Jewish sculptor made a statue of Christ notable for its ugliness and repulsiveness—a hideous caricature of the goodness and beauty we believe to have been resident in the body that was broken on the cross for us men and our sins. Doubtless there is the antichrist in art.

The great French writer who called himself France (that was not his name—I might as well call myself Uncle Sam or America) Anatole France, was an atheist. His writings undermine faith in God and in Christ. Doubtless in him and similar writers we have the antichrist in literature. Nietzsche was a hater of Christ. His

school of writers represent the antichrist in philosophy. Doubtless multitudes of selfish, brutal, lying, cheating business men represent the antichrist in business. Shoals of lying, crooked, scheming, grafting politicians doubtless represent the antichrist in politics. Anarchy and atheistic theories of violence and class warfare are likewise of the same spirit.

Christian Science, with its denial of the essential deity and true fleshly nature of Jesus Christ is a picture of the antichrist in religion. And so also is every religious teacher who denies that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. Such is the teaching of John.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE PAROUSIA AND WHAT FOLLOWS

Premillennialism revels in a maze of high-sounding technical terms. These put ordinary Christians at a disadvantage, as without special teaching not 2 per cent of them understand the language of premillennialism. So much is this so that Dr. Gray has devoted considerable space to a glossary of "prophetic" words, otherwise a technical dictionary of premillennialism, as many of the words and terms are used in a special, technical sense.

I shall be told that other sciences, as astronomy, have a technical terminology of their own. Quite so, but all astronomers use the same language. In astronomy "nebula" means "nebula" everywhere. It would be a strange kind of astronomy which would call the moon, Mars, and the planets, suns. Such an astronomer would find it hard to converse with an ordinary student. Both would be talking of the same thing under different names. Just so, when premillennialists talk of the "parousia" and the "rapture," they refer to a common topic with all of us, for they then speak of the coming of Christ and of his

taking up his people to himself in the air at his appearing.

According to the theory we condemn, what ordinary Bible readers had supposed was a simple matter—that Christ will come once and raise the dead, hold the judgment, and wind up the affairs of this world—is split up and strained into such a confusion and maze of technicalities that even a trained theologian is liable to err in representing properly what are the real views of its adherents.

Following one of the leading American schools of premillennialism, we find the order as follows: Christ will appear in the heavens at any time. This is called the “parousia,” tho “appearance” seems hardly the proper word, for Dr. Gray says Christ will at this time secretly snatch away his saints. This raising the righteous dead and snatching away the living saints is the rapture. Herein Christ has come once. Then there is to intervene a period of seven years called “the tribulation.” During this time occurs the marriage of the Lamb to the Church, his bride, in the air. At the end of this time Christ comes again, the *second* second coming, and raises the righteous dead who perished during the tribulation era—the

*second* first resurrection. This *second* *second* coming is called "the revelation."

Between the *first* second coming and the *second* second coming intervene exactly seven years—the tribulation. If we follow Blackstone, we know better what is going to happen in that far-distant time than we know what has happened in a not remote past. He outlines it as: "The Tribulation, or Time between the Rapture and the Revelation in which there will be a period of seven years, at the commencement of which those Jews who shall have returned to their land in unbelief, and have rebuilt or be rebuilding their temple, enter into a seven years' covenant with the Antichrist. On the expiration of three and a half years he is revealed in his true character as the Man of Sin, kills the two witnesses who had been prophesying during that time, stops the daily sacrifice which had been resumed, and has his own Image set up in the holy place. The devil and his angels are cast out into the earth, having great wrath, because their time is short. Then follow, during the last three and a half years the treading under foot of the holy city and the time of the 'great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be,' which, under the Antichrist and his Prophet, shall come upon



all the world; the penalty of death being suffered by as many as refuse to worship the Image of the Beast, and unparalleled persecution undergone by all who have not received his mark. A third part of the Jews in the land are brought through this time of trouble, and are gathered by the Lord into Jerusalem, to be purged of their dross. The nations are assembled against the city; which is taken by them, great suffering being inflicted upon the inhabitants, half of whom are carried into captivity. The remnant no more again stay upon him that smote them, but stay upon the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The kings of the earth are gathered to battle against Jehovah and against his Anointed. Then shall the Lord go forth, with his saints, for the destruction of his enemies and the deliverance of his people."

Then follows, as we learn from others, the Battle of Armageddon, during which (to quote further from Blackstone): "The power of the Antichrist is broken and destroyed by the voice of the Lord; he and the False Prophet are taken and cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone, and the ten allied kings and their armies are slain by the sword proceeding out of the mouth of the King of kings. The Devil is bound for a thousand years in the bottomless

pit, during which time the martyrs under the Antichrist, who shall have been raised as the completion of the first resurrection, will reign over the earth with the Lord Jesus and their fellow-saints."

The resurrections and judgments are as follows: A *first* first resurrection, that of the dead in Christ at the parousia and rapture; a *second* first resurrection of the martyrs under the Antichrist seven years later at the revelation; and a *third* resurrection, that of the wicked dead at the end of the millennium. The *first* judgment-day will be that of Christians at the parousia or *first* second coming of Christ. The *second* judgment-day is that of Israel at the *second* second coming of Christ. The *third* judgment-day is that of the Gentile nations following the *second* judgment-day. The *fourth* judgment-day immediately follows the millennium. On it the wicked are judged.

Will Christ at the parousia secretly snatch away his bride, the church, and leave the rest of the world undisturbed for seven years? It is one thing to dream of what will happen at the parousia: it is another thing to read the exact statement in the plain words of Holy Scripture.

Putting the Greek word *parousia* where it

belongs in the English text, what do we find? In Matt. 24: 3, the disciples asked: "What shall be the sign of thy parousia and of the end of the world?" Along in his discourse Jesus said: "For as the lightning, cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the *parousia* of the Son of man be" (v. 27). The parousia will be sudden, swift, dazzling, and visible.

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the *parousia* of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *until the day that Noe entered into the ark*, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the parousia of the Son of Man be" (vs. 37-39).

Premillennialists tell us that only the righteous will be snatched away at the parousia and the wicked will be left; and during a part of that time the wicked will actually rejoice and send gifts to one another. Life will go on as usual for exactly seven years. But Christ says that the feasting and marrying will suddenly come to an end; the righteous will be caught up into the eternal ark, and the wicked will be suddenly overwhelmed with the terrors and catastrophe that will take "them all away."

Please remember this is at the parousia, not seven years later.

Paul describes the parousia. Comforting the Thessalonians, who are apparently disturbed lest their beloved dead who have passed away before the parousia will have no part therein, he assures them: "We which are alive and remain unto the parousian of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4:15, 16).

Premillennialist scholars well know that the dead in Christ shall rise *first*, before the righteous living are transfigured. That *first* does not refer to a priority of the order of the resurrection of the dead, but to the fact that the living will not precede the dead in the regard of Christ. We are constantly told that the dead in Christ shall rise first, before the wicked rise, whereas Paul was not discussing the case of the wicked at all.

The foregoing scripture does not favor the idea of a secret parousia. It will be with a

shout, and with a trumpet-blast loud enough to wake the dead. Turn again to the description of the parousia in Matthew 24: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (vs. 29, 30).

I shall be told that this describes the *second* second coming of Christ which premillennialists call "the revelation." But to say so is to impugn the sincerity of Christ; for they asked him concerning his parousia. If he was not talking about his parousia words have no meaning. Three times in the discourse he repeated, "So shall the parousia of the Son of man be." To deny therefore, that he was discussing the parousia is to openly challenge his truthfulness. What these tremendous signs in the heavens may be is not known yet, perhaps, but the fact that all the tribes of the earth will mourn at the sight of the Son of man precludes the idea of secrecy.

We have indubitable proof also that the wicked dead will be raised at this time, for we

read: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; *and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him* and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

Another proof that this event is the parousia and not something exactly seven years later is shown by further reference to the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew. In the midst of his discourse upon the parousia, Christ warned of the suddenness of that hour: "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." To the evil servant who grows weary in waiting for his Lord and begins to smite his fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunken, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him." "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."

Now assuming that there will be a *second* second coming called the revelation—which is really impossible—it is evident that this is not meant here, for Christian people would be warned of the sudden return of their Master and according to the premillennial theory Christian people will be all snatched up at the parousia. Again, the *second* second coming will be exactly seven years after the *first* second coming, according to premillennialists. Now, if all



the true Christians were suddenly to disappear on a given day, would there be any difficulty at all about counting out seven years and computing exactly when the *second* second coming would take place? Instead of being an unknown event it could be forecast with the accuracy of an eclipse.

Before we leave the parousia another striking fact must be noted. Instead of the parousia being the beginning of the career of Antichrist, it is definitely declared to be the absolute end of his career. Speaking of the man of sin, otherwise the Antichrist, the apostle Paul plainly marks him out as the one "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his parousias" (II Thess. 2: 8). The English reader will kindly observe that I have in this discussion of the parousia simply copied the Greek word into the English version wherever and only as it appears in the Greek text.

The Bible tells us quite plainly what will appear at the parousia: Stars will fall, the sun and moon be darkened, tribes of the earth will mourn, the last trump will sound so loud it will wake the dead, Antichrist will be destroyed, the righteous and wicked will be raised, every eye shall see him, and a terrible calamity will smite

the wicked and take them all away. With the exception of the one passage in Revelation which agrees so exactly in phraseology as to leave no doubt that it is treating of the same thing, I have here set out only those texts in which the original plainly names the parousia as being the subject discussed. Many other texts undoubtedly referring to the coming of Christ have been omitted in order to confine the present discussion to what the Greek Testament says about the parousia.

According to the verdict of these texts there is no room for a secret parousia and rapture.

## CHAPTER XXI

### THE GREAT TRIBULATION; ARMAGEDDON; ARE THERE THREE RESURRECTIONS?

Premillennialists split up the second coming of Christ in order to make room for a great tribulation between the parousia, or *first* second coming, and the revelation, or *second* second coming.

Many scriptures tell us that we must pass through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of God. Scriptures also tell of the distress that shall fall upon this earth. These are gathered together, cast into the mold of premillennial theology, and made to predict what the writers evidently never dreamed of—a strange era of seven years beginning just after Christ comes the second time and ending when he comes the second time. This strange statement is not due to an oversight of the proofreader, but is due to the oversight of premillennialists in splitting the second coming up into two comings.

The Scriptures besides warning us of the constant tribulation of the Christian life do speak of one special era of suffering. Speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ said: “Then

shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be'' (Matt. 24: 21).

As every student of the subject knows, these words were amply fulfilled at the siege of Jerusalem under Titus. Read the stirring story in Josephus. Yet I am willing to admit that those were doubtless typical of the times of distress at the end of the world.

Will the church pass through the great tribulation? This is a question which premillennialists delight to ask. It has been answered by their teachers in the negative so often one wonders how it can ever be asked of them by any one at all familiar with their teaching.

The Christian church withdrew from Jerusalem, according to the advice of Christ, at the advent of the besieging armies. Thus by taking his advice they escaped the great tribulation—not however, by being snatched out of the world. Doubtless if there is to be a similar tribulation analogous to that, they will be delivered in the same way, not through being snatched out of the world, but through various providential provisions too intricate to forecast, too complex to predict by one not gifted in such mysteries, but simple and easy enough for the divine foresight and care which counts the hairs of every head.

According to the premillennial theory, Babylon, the literal city, will be rebuilt in Mesopotamia. It will be the capital of the political Gentile world. Under its lead and in league with the Antichrist and the devil there will be gathered in northern Palestine at Armageddon one of the greatest armies of all time. Here they will join forces with the Jews who refuse to worship Antichrist and possibly other good people then living and begin the mightiest battle of all time, the Battle of Armageddon. Just as the gods are said to have fought at the siege of Troy, so devils will be present to strive mightily against the Lord's people at this battle. But it will go against the devil's army, for Christ and his glorified saints will also join in; and the result will finally be disaster for the devil. We are not told whether the devil's agents in this battle will ride air-planes, operate machine-guns, or manipulate poison gas.

This great battle deserves study. It is a veritable citadel of premillennial theology.

We are told the Holy Ghost will be withdrawn from the earth in this period. One wonders how anybody could be saved to resist the devil at all. Yet we are assured that this era will be a great salvation time. Apparently the world will get along better, so far as salvation is concerned,

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without the Holy Spirit than with him. This sounds strange, indeed.

One can see how you could fight a wicked man with a gun, but the devil's "intangible forces without a corporeity" are also in the battle. How could one fight such "intangible forces" with gun and bayonet? Dr. Carson says the glorified saints will appear on the battle-field. If saved the reader and writer will be there, if the theory is true. Does it not seem sad, even sordid, to pass from the rapture of the marriage supper of the Lamb to the heat and passion and filth of the great smoky battle-field of Armageddon?

Some Christians believe that the government can empower a man—even a Christian man to execute a criminal, or even to kill in battle for his country. This is a subject of keen debate. Doubtless such a duty would be undertaken with reluctance by any man as being a highly disagreeable task. But the question of shooting men for the sake of one's country and fighting with carnal weapons for the glory of God is an entirely different matter. Without entering into the first controversy at all, I feel safe in saying that not one Christian in one thousand would believe that a contingency would ever arise where he could use carnal weapons for the advancement of the cause of Christ. This great



battle in which are mingled saints, sinners, Jews, devils, discarnate demons, holy angels, glorified saints, Satan, and Christ, all fiercely striving amid blood, sweat, filth, dirt, dust, guns, swords, poison gas, tanks, and air-planes, leaves one not just cold, but intensely horrified at the very thought. One could wish never to hear of it again; and especially living or dead, never to see it.

Be assured that once Christ's child has been raised from the dead by his Lord never again will his white robes trail through the blood and mire of an earthly battle-field.

What then is the battle of Armageddon? Briefly, it is a spiritual struggle now going on between truth and error, the principle of holiness and the spiritual powers of darkness. What more do we need to know of such mysteries?

As has been previously shown, premillennialists teach three separate resurrections. The resurrection of the tribulation saints at the revelation is counted by them as the finishing of the so-called first resurrection of Christ's people at the parousia. But inasmuch as the supposed resurrection of the tribulation saints occurs, according to the theory, seven years after the first resurrection, I submit that it must of necessity be a second resurrection, and the last resurrec-

tion of the wicked would be a third resurrection.

Closer inquiry, however, will reveal that we cannot get along with merely three resurrections on the premillennial scheme, but are inevitably bound to a fourth one if the theory is true. No provision is made for the resurrection of the righteous dead—unnumbered millions of them—who died during the millennium. Christ has pledged himself to forget none of his saints in the grave, “that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day” (John 6:39).

During the millennium all the processes of life are to continue: love, marriage, industry, procreation, nutrition, and, of course, death. Since the earth will be released from the physical curse and it will be a thousand times more generous and kindly toward human life than now, and also since some claim that the millennium will be possibly millions of years in duration, I think it fair, on any supposition to assume that there will be numberless millions of righteous dead within its embrace at its close—probably far more than all the righteous dead who will arise at the parousia. On Christ’s word these must arise, and they must arise at the resurrection of the wicked or they must arise in a third, or if after the wicked, in a fourth resurrection.

There is only one scripture in the Bible which it may seem could be construed to teach more than one literal resurrection of the dead. There are many scriptures which teach more than one resurrection, but all these are allowed to be "spiritual" except the following from that mysterious book of symbols and figures that has taxed the ingenuity of lay and professional students for twenty centuries, namely the Book of Revelation. There we read:

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Ch. 20: 4—6).

It is impossible to believe this to be a literal resurrection of all the saints of the church age. Rather it is a picture of the triumph of the early

martyrs of Jesus over the paganism of the first centuries.

Some premillennialists hold that this passage refers to the resurrection of the martyrs of the so-called "tribulation era" which is to take place at the revelation or second coming of Christ. This seems unlikely from their own standpoint. They say that the resurrection of the multiplied millions of the righteous dead of all past ages has occurred previously at the parousia. In that instance the resurrection of the so-called "tribulation saints" would be the second resurrection instead of the first. It would be strange if that resurrection which includes the vast majority of all God's people should be passed over in silence by the Revelator and a later resurrection of the comparatively few martyrs of the tribulation era should alone be dignified with the title of "the first resurrection."

Furthermore, the Revelator saw the souls of them that were beheaded with an ax—*tas psuchas ton pepelekismenon* (from *pelekus*, an ax). This is evidently a technical expression referring to the victims of the ax of the Roman executioners. We follow the opinion of the vast majority of commentators, therefore, in refer-

ring this passage to the early martyrs and confessors of the primitive church.

If these are meant, however, the passage will not bear a literal interpretation, because according to premillennial theory the wicked dead have not yet been resurrected. For if judgment is given to the martyrs literally it must be a personal judgment; and the only way this judgment could be executed in literal exactness would be by the resurrection of the men who persecuted the martyrs. Nero must stand before the throne on which Paul sits; and so on with the other martyrs. If they are literally resurrected and given a literal judgment, it means nothing unless their persecutors are there to bear the judgment. But this is impossible for "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Some scholars have seen in this second resurrection a prophecy of the time when the principles of the martyrs should reign in palace and court of justice, in the very districts where they had suffered. They say that to the eye of the church gazing from a field strewn with the bones and dismembered corpses of its rarest, holiest members, the day when the ban should be lifted and the palaces echo with the tread of Christian feet, when princes and judges should openly

worship Christ, however imperfectly, was to be regarded as the resurrection-day of the martyrs of Jesus, during which their spirits should sit upon thrones and judge the world of that time by giving it customs, laws, and moral ideals.

Altho this is more reasonable than to upset all the plain teaching of Jesus and the apostles by interpreting this first resurrection to be a literal resurrection of all the saints of the church age, yet we prefer the view that the reign of the saints was with Christ in paradise. While the persecutors vented their rage against the poor blackened bones and broken bodies of the martyrs, they, seated above the stars, beyond the reach of the sword or flame, reigned in serene splendor a thousand years, reigned until the fires of passion and prejudice had burned to cold ashes and the pride of their persecutors had rotted into the oblivion of nameless graves.

The first resurrection may be figurative and the second literal. This is not unreasonable or contrary to Scriptural precedent. Indeed, they might be described in this way to distinguish the spiritual from the literal resurrection. We read of the second death. We know that the first death is literal and the second death is spiritual. Again, we read: "Ye must be born again." Is this second birth natural because the first birth



is physical? If the second birth and the second death are spiritual and figurative, why should we say that the first resurrection and the second resurrection must both be the same, namely, physical?

The term "resurrection" is frequently used in a figurative way, either as symbolical of the salvation of the soul or of the revival of a people or a cause. It is not necessary narrowly to distinguish them, they are both examples of non-literal application. "And you, being dead in your sins . . . hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses" (Col. 2:13). This speaks of resurrection as being spiritual. Many other scriptures might be cited to the same effect.

Typical of another line of scriptures is the famous passage in the 37th chapter of Ezekiel in which the restoration of Israel is prefigured by the resurrection of a mighty army in the valley of dry bones. This passage is on all hands allowed to be figurative. It is the same kind of resurrection as the "first resurrection" in the twentieth chapter of Revelation.

Blackstone puts weight on the expression *ek nekron*—"from the dead." He says this signifies that Christ's people are to rise out of the dead or from the dead and thus leave some of

the dead yet in their graves. The argument is very ingenious and technical, but the usage in question simply expresses the idea of resurrection from the state of the dead. More than this is guess-work. The argument is negated by the indiscriminate use of either *ek nekron*, "from the dead"; or *nekron*, "of the dead." In the notable passage wherein Paul admittedly discusses the resurrection of the righteous dead only (I Cor. 15:12) he writes indiscriminately concerning the resurrection "from the dead" and "of the dead."

That all the dead will rise at one time is the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Dan. 12:2, 3).

Sometimes objection is made that this resurrection is not the general resurrection of all the dead because it does not say "all," but "many." The Hebrew word *rabbim* here translated "many," signifies a vast multitude. Taken in connection with other scriptures we are obliged to define that vast multitude as

all of them which sleep (literally) in the "ground of dust." In any case the idea is clear that righteous and wicked both rise at the same time, some to life and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

We get a picture of this resurrection in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, where we read: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell [*hades* world of death] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works" (vs. 11-15).

It is said by premillennialists that this resurrection is of the wicked alone. But this cannot be, else why the mockery of having there the book of life? "Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." The expression "whosoever" is a strong implication that only a part of those present were not found therein.

In the study of Christian evidences it is necessary to put some faith in the sincerity of God. We assume that he will not deceive us. And the candid, unbiased reader will surely get the impression of universality from this passage, great and small being called from hades and death and from the vast deeps of the sea—all this creates an atmosphere of universality which must have a meaning if the Bible is not a puzzle-book. "Whosoever was not found written," surely implies that some were found written there. Is that implication false? It is a question of the sincerity of the Biblical writer.

Jesus said that righteous and wicked would arise at the same time: "For the hour [Greek *hora*, hour] is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29).

Here Jesus plainly sets the resurrection of righteous and wicked at the same time. This resurrection occurs at the event called the parousia in the Greek Testament. There we read, "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the parousia of the Lord shall not prevent [pre-

cede] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first [i. e., before the glorification of the living saints, not before the resurrection of the wicked dead]: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (I Thess. 4: 15-17).

This voice and trumpet sound is the one which wakes all the dead because it is the last trump. "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye [this change in us takes place at the parousia; but when?] at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (I Cor. 15: 51, 52).

Undoubtedly this is the hour when all that are in the graves shall hear his voice; and this voice sounds at the same time as the last trump, which is placed at the parousia.

Christ said that the righteous and wicked would be raised in the same hour. He promised to raise the believer "at the last day" (John 6: 40 and three other times in the same chapter). Premillennialists say that day will be possibly

more than a thousand years long. But the last trump is the one that sounds for the righteous dead. Are we asked to believe that that last trump is to continue to sound throughout a thousand years? How can it be construed as on one resurrection-day unless the work of resurrection proceeds more or less continuously throughout the whole day?

This is the day of resurrection preached by Paul when he said: "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust" (Acts 24: 15).



## CHAPTER XXII

### ARE THERE FOUR JUDGMENT-DAYS?

Premillennialists assure us there will be four judgments. Blackstone describes them as: "Of believers, as to their character, on the cross. Of believers, as to their works, at the judgment seat of Christ. Of the living nations at the Revelation. Of the ungodly at the Great White Throne."

In contradiction to this we read the solemn words of Paul: "He hath appointed *a day*, in the which he will *judge the world* in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). God will judge the world through Christ in one day, of which event the resurrection of Christ is surety.

The Scriptures give us a curious sidelight upon the day of judgment, but little noticed nowadays. Writing to Christian people, the writer of Hebrews exhorts them to "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, *that they may do it with joy, and not with grief*: for that is unprofitable for you"

(Heb. 13:17). In connection with other scriptures this teaches that ministers will give account of their hearers at the judgment-day. Of whom will they give an account with grief, if not of the lost? There will be no grief over the saved. Now if the ministers are good men—and surely not all are bad—then here are good and bad in one judgment scene: good men giving an account with grief of bad men.

It is the desire of Paul, as of all good ministers, “that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Col. 1:28). But the writer of Hebrews has warned us of the possibility of being unable to do this. If the premillennial doctrine of two judgments be true and only the righteous appear in the first one, then Paul need have had no concern, for every man presented by himself would be a saint.

This judgment will occur at the parousia—which premillennialists concede to be the first of Christ’s second comings—according to the Greek Testament, where we read: “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his parousia?” (I Thess. 2:19).

This coming, or parousia, is the time when the wicked will be judged: “And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall

be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction . . . [When?] . . . When he shall come to be glorified in his saints" (II Thess. 1:7-9).

Premillennialists tell us that the judgment of the wicked will not be held until the close of the millennium, a thousand years after Christ's first second coming. But that judgment and everlasting penalty are said to be executed on the wicked "when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." And if Christ is not glorified in his saints at the time when he glorifies them at the parousia and rapture, then words have no meaning.

Notice complete disproof of this theory. The men who are to be punished with eternal penalty are the very ones who are troubling believers at Christ's coming to be glorified in his saints. This can only be at the parousia for according to the premillennial theory, the saints are snatched up at the parousia and entirely escape the tribulation of the last days. The righteous people of the following age, if any, will not be the "you" to whom Paul wrote, for they do not belong to the "you" (us) or our church age.

Manifestly Paul was writing to "you" (us) of the church age, for he literally addressed himself to the saints in Thessalonica two thousand years ago. He surely could not have intended to mean the righteous people who might be alive at the end of the millennium in another dispensation, a thousand years after the coming of Christ.

This could not be "the judgment of the nations," as the guilty were punished with everlasting destruction. Nations have no souls to suffer eternal punishment.

This fire that flames forth at the parousia (I use this technical term because it is accepted by premillennialists to escape the circumlocution of saying the first second coming. It means the very next time Christ comes, or the moment when he snatches up his saints.) is referred to again by Paul: "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for *the day* shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is" (I Cor. 3: 13). Here Paul teaches that the fire that accompanies Christ's parousia shall try every man's work. Some would limit this to Christians only. Paul said every man, and every man it is.

This revelation of the secrets of every heart

at the general judgment which takes place at the parousia exposes the evil secrets of wicked men: "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and *then* shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:5).

Here, at the very time when the hidden things of darkness are exposed at the coming of Christ, the righteous shall have praise of God. We can make no other sense out of it. The sins committed previously to conversion of the saints are remembered no more, and will not even appear in judgment. And surely no one can say that the wicked will have praise of God. Clearly both will appear at the judgment seat of Christ.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that *he hath done*, whether it be *good or bad*" (II Cor. 5:10). It is claimed that the "we" who must all appear before the judgment seat includes only Christians, but a reading of the text will show that the awards of that judgment seat are good and bad. Since he will not award bad to those forgiven through his atoning passion, we may be sure both good and bad are included in the number required to attend.

“ . . . The Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom” (1<sup>st</sup> Tim. 4:1). His appearing is his *parousia* (here called *epiphaneia*). His kingdom is the eternal kingdom of glory revealed at his coming. This judgment is described more particularly by Paul, who writes concerning the “*day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deed: to them who . . . seek for glory . . . eternal life: but unto them that . . . do not obey the truth . . . indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil*” (Rom. 2: 5-9). Here we see both classes judged at one time in the day of the righteous judgment of God. The Apostle continues, “their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another; In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (vs. 15, 16).

Herein is clearly set forth that in the day of God’s judgment he will render to every man according to his deeds: eternal life to some and tribulation to others. All this is done in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men’s hearts, namely, the judgment-day.

Paul places both classes and all men before the judgment at one time: “For we shall all



stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then *every one of us* shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12). Beyond question this prophecy that every knee shall bow is here applied by Paul to cover the whole human race.

This day of judgment is described as coming suddenly upon the ungodly: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now . . . are kept in store [for the millennium, say some, but, no] reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men [not judgment on nations, but on ungodly men] . . . But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (II Pet. 3:7, 10).

Christ brings rewards and punishment with him when he comes to judge the world: "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

At this coming not only will the righteous be raised from their graves but the wicked dead also. Even those who crucified Jesus will be

raised from the grave to see him coming in the clouds: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him" (Rev. 1:7).

Christ fixed the reward of righteous and wicked at the coming of the Son of man: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and *then* he shall *reward every man* according to his works" (Matt. 16:27).

In the parable of the tares, the judgment of righteous and wicked is at the same time: "Let both grow together *until the harvest*: . . . I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together *first* the tares, and bind them in bundles *to burn them*: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt. 13:30). We are told that the wicked will be judged a thousand years after the righteous but here we are told that the tares will be gathered first for burning. These tares are not nations, but individuals. "The tares are the children of the wicked one" (v. 38). "The harvest is the end of the world. . . . The Son of man shall send forth his angels and they shall gather out of his kingdom . . . them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire . . . Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun" (vs. 39, 41-43).

Here the righteous and wicked meet their fate at the same time.

There are three striking pictures of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, each viewing that majestic event from a different perspective. Each of these pictures denies and contradicts the premillennial doctrine. Surely Jesus did not inadvertently omit the premillennial point of view. He did so with good reason, doubtless. The wise and foolish virgins both met their fate at the same identical hour. Both were rewarded and punished at the same time. The Lord of the servants to whom were committed the talents called them together at the same time and rewarded and punished them all at one time. He did not wait a long time after rewarding the good before punishing the wicked. One heard, "Well done thou good and faithful servant . . . I will make thee ruler . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," but another heard the sentence: "Take therefore the talent from him . . . and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness."

Thus with two solemn warnings of simultaneous general judgment for good and bad at his coming does our Lord introduce the majestic picture of the last general judgment which is to

take place immediately upon his return to this earth.

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: and before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world . . . . Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (vs. 31-41.) Here we have the time of the judgment at the coming of Christ; the judge—Christ; the subjects—all nations; the sentence—the everlasting kingdom of God, or eternal hell.

Premillennialists tell us this is not the general judgment; but only a “judgment of the nations.” All nations, *panta ta ethne*, is exactly the same expression as is used in Matt. 28:19 to describe the persons to whom the gospel may be preached. Are we only commanded to preach the gospel to the living nations who may be on

earth at Christ's coming? If so, how shall we know when to begin to preach to them?

Dr. Gray admits that this scripture presents much difficulty to the premillennial scheme (A Text-Book on Prophecies, p. 111). The good Doctor excuses himself from grappling with those difficulties because of a lack of space. I trust, therefore, that I shall render a useful service to students of the subject by devoting a little space to those difficulties.

We are asked to believe this is not a judgment of individuals, but of nations. To the unbiased view of many generations of Christian readers this has presented itself as a picture of the assembled people of the world before God. The idea that nations will be judged as nations in one final assize is so preposterous that nothing but the exigencies of a hard-pressed theory could ever have suggested it here. If a nation is to be judged, is it to be judged on the entire record of its history? If so, how is justice possible if only the living nations are judged? For instance, if this judgment should come in our lifetime, how could the government and nation of George V answer for the acts of the government and nation of Henry VIII? How absurd it is to hold the last generation living for the sins of nations in ages past!

According to this interpretation—i.e., if this is a judgment of nations—then the good nations will enter the eternal reward of Christ and the wicked nations be cast into eternal hell. What nation is there that is good enough to enter heaven in one company? Perhaps all the nations have sinned and will all be cast into hell. In that case there will be no sheep on the right hand. Will the Christian people in a wicked nation be cast into hell? If only the wicked people in a wicked nation are penalized, then it is not a judgment of nations, but of individuals.

Premillennialists tell us the nations will be judged according to their treatment of Israel, meaning the Jews. A Jewish friend of mine says that the United States flag is the only one never stained with Jewish blood. I shall not debate whether this is strictly correct, but there is at least much truth in it. If this is so, then Uncle Sam will be the only one of the nations to stand on the right hand in that day; and instead of there being a herd of sheep as we had supposed there will only be one—our good old United States.

And if the United States is saved in that day, and the other nations are cast into hell, let us ask, "Will all the people of the nation be



saved?" The nation is only composed of people, of course. Will our "war-grafters," bootleggers, and jail-birds stand among the blessed because Uncle Sam was good to the Jews, while the good Christian people of, say, England will be cast into eternal fire because that nation once persecuted the Jews long ago? I beg seriously to say that this is the logical implication of a judgment of nations as nations and not of individuals. I shall be accused of trifling with a solemn subject, but the charge logically lies against the supporters of such a theory. I am only seriously showing the inconsistencies of eternal judgment on living nations as nations and not as individuals, which is the premillennial view.

When calamity or judgment falls on a nation, it falls on good and bad alike. When Russia toppled to her doom, doubtless as a judgment for the iniquities of the czar's rule, the czar was reduced to dust, it is true, but the sword of judgment struck thousands of Christian people and of innocent and helpless as well. This is conceivable in a world of continuous discipline and progressive providence. Here the innocent often suffer with the guilty. But it is unthinkable that in a final assize of eternal justice the good and the bad of each nation should be in-

extricably confused and suffer eternal penalty together.

Nations have no souls; they can only be judged in time, and they are constantly so judged. But at the judgment described in this passage the guilty go into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Plainly, this is hell. Will a whole nation be cast into hell as a nation? If so would it be just to cast the good people into hell for the sins of the nation? Modern governments generally have powerful opposition parties. Would the opposition be condemned for the deeds of the majority party which it opposed?

If only the bad individuals of the nation are cast into hell and the good individuals of that nation are admitted into heaven at this judgment, then it is no national judgment at all, as such, but a judgment of individuals, such as has been the common belief of Christendom for ages.

Premillennialists hold that all Christians will be snatched away at Christ's coming and the wicked left to roam the earth and perhaps later to repent. But this solemn picture of the judgment at Christ's coming warns us that no such thing is possible. At his coming he will judge the people of all nations. This is the judgment at which John "saw a great white throne, and

him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works . . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:11-15).

The Apostle suggests the only safe way to meet that day fearlessly: "Little children, abide in him; that, *when he shall appear*, we may *have confidence*, and *not be ashamed* before him *at his coming*" (I John 2:28). And again he writes: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*" (I John 4:17). Therefore, his coming and the day of judgment both occur at *the same time*.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### SATAN BOUND A THOUSAND YEARS

“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection” (Rev. 20:1-5).

This passage is used as the keystone of pre-millennial teaching. All the rest of the Bible is bent to conform to a literal interpretation of this sublime vision enshrined in the heart of a

Book of mysterious symbols. Let it be clearly understood that by this nothing derogatory to the wonderful Book is meant. Revelation is a part of the Word of God. It was inspired in uttermost detail by the Holy Spirit. Some think that to adopt a non-literal interpretation of poetic or symbolic and figurative language is, somehow, to detract from its weight and validity. Nothing could be further from the fact. That is the only way to avoid making the language false and ridiculous.

In the warmth of his trust and gratitude the Psalmist cried concerning God, our heavenly Father: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust" (Ps. 91:4). That is true. More, it is the inspired utterance of the Holy Spirit himself. But do I withdraw one atom from its weight, do I deny one syllable of its truth, when I say that it does not teach, and was not meant to teach that God has feathers and wings like a bird? To interpret the passage literally is to make it false. It is to deny utterly its truthfulness.

The hearers of Christ's message in which he exhorted them to eat his flesh and drink his blood gave no extra measure of respect to his words when they accepted them literally. On the contrary they made them utterly false by so

doing and perverted the wholesome bread of true and sober doctrine into the foul and filthy garbage of grotesque and blasphemous falsehood.

I write with warm sympathy for those who find difficulty in accepting fanciful, strained, and far-fetched interpretations of the symbols of Daniel and Revelation. I appreciate the feelings of revulsion with which they see that sublime symbolism bent and twisted to suit each man's private desire. Changing the figure, I invite timid souls to venture with me into the mighty floods of apocalyptic literature only so far as one may go by wading and keeping his feet on the solid ground of historical fact. Perhaps we can also hold to bushes and overhanging limbs of trees so as not to get in beyond the depth of practical-minded men and women.

In Daniel, second chapter, we read of an image having a head of gold, breast and arms of silver, belly and thighs of brass, legs of iron, etc. Let me ask: Was there then such a literal thing on earth? Is it on earth now? Premillennialists tell us, what we believe is correct—there is not and never was such an image on earth. It was a vision. It signifies something—various earthly nations, they say.

Very good. Now turn to the seventh chapter.



There we read of a lion with eagle's wings, a leopard with four wings, and yet another beast with iron teeth and ten horns. Are there on earth such beasts today? In what jungle roam the leopard with four wings and the beast with ten horns? These are not literal beasts, premillennialists admit. They are symbols. They signify something. They represent nations. That view seems reasonable.

Practically all Christian Bible scholars, Fundamentalist and Modernist alike, say that the monster with ten horns represents some nation. Many Modernists hold that it symbolizes the Greek Empire. The old Protestant view, and that of present-day Fundamentalists, is that this beast represents the Roman Empire. The reason Liberals deny that this is the Roman Empire is not because they reject the figurative interpretation here, but because to say that Daniel foresaw the Roman Empire is to admit a definite predictive element in the prophecy which they are unwilling to do, for dogmatic reasons. Evidently John did not identify this ten-horned beast with the Greek Empire, for he introduces it into the Revelation long after the Greek Empire had fallen. Instead of calling it a beast, in Revelation 20 he calls it a dragon, but it is the same fierce monster with the ten horns. We

only follow the example of Christian scholars for ages when we identify this beast with pagan Rome.

A parallel passage to the binding of the dragon is found in the twelfth chapter of the Revelation. It reads as follows:

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne” (vs. 1-5).

We interpret this to be a gigantic pageant depicting the fall of paganism as represented by the Roman Empire in the ancient world. The woman is the church. The man-child cannot be Christ, for he has long since been born. We identify the man-child with the host of saints

caught up to God's throne from the sacrificial flames of the martyr-fires. The dragon with the ten horns is doubtless the same beast previously seen in Daniel having ten horns. He represents Roman paganism.

As for the war in heaven, who can believe that the eternal omnipotent God was ever so put to his wits' end as to be forced to endure the presence of a filthy monster spewing in his throne-room of heaven and fighting against his holy angels with a host of batlike, foul, and slimy angels of hell? Such an idea will do for childish, heathen mythology, but it has no place in a spiritual, Christian theology with its lofty conception of the infinite sweep of divine wisdom and power. If Satan had ever contemplated such a thing God would have foreknown it for more billions of years than there have been drops of rain fallen since the creation of the world. While God gives Satan his moral freedom, yet physically he can no more resist God than a baby can repress the tides of the seven seas with his little finger.

No, this heaven which the prophet saw is the stage on which the majestic drama is played. It is the place of power and honor from which Christ's servants and angels cast the slimy monster down into dishonor and defeat.

Now, when we turn to the twentieth chapter we see the same majestic drama reenacted, the same glorious victory foretold. A mighty messenger of God lays hold on Roman paganism, here identified with pagan Rome, and casts him into the pit and chains him there for a thousand years. That is, paganism was to be overthrown, but not forever—only for a long time. For at the end of the thousand years he would again go forth to deceive the nations.

It is often assumed that this dragon is the literal Satan. Notice that he is the same beast as the one previously met with in Daniel, seventh chapter, and in Revelation, twelfth chapter. He is also called “the devil, and Satan” in Rev. 12:9. The ten horns are the trade-mark of Rome. We identify him with paganism because the church had no fight with the civil government of Rome as such, but she did have a tragic battle with Imperial Rome as the embodiment of paganism.

Quite true, he is called “the devil, and Satan.” But Jesus Christ once “turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me Satan: thou art an offence unto me” (Matt. 16:23). Was Peter in very truth the devil himself? The question answers itself. Free from the stress of controversial strife, most Christians would be will-

ing to admit that Peter was called Satan merely because he was doing Satan's work. Roman paganism, which accused the saints before the tribunal of Roman law and sought and obtained convictions which cost the precious blood of martyrs, was beyond measure the accuser of Christians. Devil (Greek, diabolos) means "false accuser." Millions of martyrs were killed through his false accusations.

Beyond all doubt there is such a thing as the binding of the personal devil himself taught in Holy Scripture, altho I do not believe that this text in Revelation, twentieth chapter, refers to that particular event. But if the passage in question has reference to the binding of the devil himself, as our premillennial brethren teach, then it is the strongest text against premillennialism in the Bible and absolutely cancels that doctrine entirely, for the binding of the devil has been done ages ago.

When the Seventy returned to Christ rejoicing because of their success, they said: "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, *I give* unto you power . . . over all the power of the enemy" (Luke 10:17-19).

Why was Christ able so boldly to give his

disciples power over "all devils" (Luke 9:1)? Why could he say, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"? The answer is because he had bound the devil. And this answer is not based on conjecture, but on the plain statement of Holy Scripture which says: "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a *stronger than he* shall come upon him, and *overcome* him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luke 11:21, 22).

Clearly this refers to Christ's victory over Satan. In this OVERCOMING Satan he BOUND him, for we read: "If I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, *except he first bind the strong man?* and then he will spoil his house" (Matt. 12:28, 29). Any Christian not biased by a preconceived opinion must see here that Christ gave the fact that he had power over devils as indubitable evidence that he had already bound Satan, the prince of devils.

Not only is Satan bound, but all of his demons are already bound with chains and have been for ages. Premillennialists tell us when they *think* the devil will be bound, but the Bible tells



us that the time of this binding has long since passed: "God spared not the angels that sinned, but *cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness*" (II Pet. 2:4). "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, *he hath reserved in everlasting chains*" (Jude 6). When God says that all the devils have been chained ages ago, how can we say that one of them will be chained up in ages to come?

To say that the Lord will put the chain on one of them and put another chain on him and thus double-chain him is a length of absurdity to which few will be willing to go. To say that the Almighty God cannot effectually subjugate the devil without repeatedly chaining him is to make a mockery of the whole doctrine of the binding of Satan.

By several plain texts drawn from the less mysterious books of Holy Scripture we have proved positively that Satan is already bound. There is no chance to find another devil to bind in future, for we have proved that *all* of them are bound forever. Therefore, if the text in Revelation twenty refers to the binding of the literal Satan, that event has been finished and the millennium has been in progress for ages.

Nevertheless, I do not believe that the passage

in Revelation twenty refers to the binding of the literal Satan. The dragon was only bound a thousand years, whereas the devils are all bound with *everlasting* chains. The thousand years represents an indefinitely long time, or is a figure of perfection. Further, the dragon is to be loosed a little season, but the devils are chained forever. The "little season" is a symbol of the fact that Satan has a little time in this age to influence souls. The dragon is to deceive the nations no more, whereas Satan is doing great work of deception today, altho bound.

This latter point is variously explained by some as referring to the "nations of them that are saved," or as meaning that Satan will not have the same power to seduce whole nations with idolatry and devil worship as in the past. But, because the binding of the dragon does not correspond closely with Christ's binding of Satan, I prefer to believe that the binding of the dragon is a symbol of the subjugation of paganism in the person of its mightiest protagonist of the Apostolic Age. However, I do believe that the binding of the dragon was a conception drawn from Christ's previous binding of the devil. Just as Christ bound the devil,

so will paganism be bound. Such was evidently the thought of the writer.

Not much need be said about the reign of the martyrs during the thousand years. Some have understood this to signify a public triumph of the principles for which they died in the very districts where they suffered. This is an unquestionable historical fact and is much more reasonable than to suppose that a literal devil was tied up with an iron chain.

A better explanation, however, is suggested by the fact that John saw [*psychas ton pepelekismenon*] — literally translated — “the souls of them that were beheaded with an ax.” He is discoursing of disembodied spirits in paradise. Their earthly reign was interrupted by sword and fagot, and the writer of the Revelation sees that reign continuing uninterrupted in spite of all the malice of their foes, with Christ in paradise. Paul speaks of the state of the blessed after death as a condition of being ‘with Christ.’ “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better” (Phil. 1:23).

Please observe also that this reign was confined to the martyrs. As heretofore indicated, the Greek word signifies those beheaded with an ax.

These words were written to encourage the weak and faltering in the most critical age of the world's history. Here the New Testament prophet sought to nerve the weak and quivering flesh of poor, frail humanity to steel itself to the indescribable horrors of martyrdom. If that object seems trivial to anyone today and beneath the notice of the Holy Spirit and the sympathizing Christ, then let him peruse the following extract from Eusebius, written shortly after these awful scenes had been enacted.

Out of many pages of the saddest recital in human history, excepting only the crucifixion of Christ, let us choose the following passage as indicative of all the rest. Describing the fiendish cruelty of the Roman governor, he says: "Whilst aiming his cruelty and madness against the worshipers of the true God, he also went beyond all the dictates of nature, not even ashamed to deny the lifeless bodies of these holy men a burial. Night and day he ordered the dead bodies to be carefully watched, as they lay exposed in the open air, the food of beasts; and there was no small number of men present several days, of such as attended to this savage and barbarous decree, and some, indeed, were looking out from their posts of observation, as if it were something worthy of their zeal to see that

the dead bodies should not be stolen. But wild beasts, and dogs, and carnivorous birds of prey, scattered the human limbs here and there in all directions, and the whole city around was spread with the entrails and bones of men, so that nothing ever appeared more dreadful or horrific, even to those who before had been the most hostile to us; they did not indeed so much lament the calamity of those against whom these things were done, as the nuisance against themselves, and the abuse heaped upon our common nature.

“For at the very gates of the city there was an exhibition presented dreadful beyond all description and tragic recital, human flesh devoured not in one place only, but scattered over every place; for it was said that limbs and masses of flesh, and parts of entrails, were to be seen even within the gates” (Ecclesiastical History, Book 8, ch. 9).

Remembering that fifty-five million of men, women, and children thus endured the awful trial of martyrdom, who can say that it was beneath the Holy Spirit’s notice to insert in the Bible itself a word of comfort that would strengthen them for the mighty conflict with this fierce accuser of the brethren?

While the reign of the martyrs was doubtless predicted to encourage the afflicted and perse-

cuted church of the first centuries, it has nevertheless a deep meaning for us. If we read it aright we shall always believe in the tender care of Christ for his people; that he watches their trials and waits to deliver them; and that he is still walking over the stormy seas of history, as once he trod the tumultuous waves of the Galilean Lake, eagerly guarding the tempest-tossed vessel which is his church.



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